

PULSES in School Meals

What is a pulse?






Pulses are nutritionally-dense, edible seeds of legumes including dry peas, lentils, chickpeas and dry beans!

Pulses are U.S.-grown!

U.S. pulses are grown in two main regions including the Northern Plains, comprised of Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, and the Palouse, which includes eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and northeastern Oregon.

Crediting Pulses and Pulse Products in School Meals

Pulses credit in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. With unique nutrient compositions, they can credit as a vegetable in the beans and peas sub-category, or as a meat/meat alternate — perfect for meat eaters, vegan and vegetarian students alike.

 Vegetable Subgroup	 Meat/Meat Alternate	 Vegetable Flour Based Pasta Products	 School Breakfast Program
<p>Grades K to 12 at lunch: minimum of ½ cup beans/peas weekly</p>	<p>½ cup of beans, chickpeas, lentils, dry peas = 2 oz. meat/meat alternate¹</p> <p>¼ cup of beans, chickpeas, lentils, dry peas. = 1 oz. meat/meat alternate¹</p>	<p>ANNOUNCED APRIL 2019</p> <p>Pasta made with 100% vegetables flours, such as chickpea flour or red lentil flour, may credit towards the vegetable category, even when served without a visible vegetable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ cup cooked pasta made with 100% vegetables flours = ½ cup vegetables (beans/peas)² 	<p>In Breakfast Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any vegetable may now be served at breakfast in place of fruit. Pulse products served at breakfast may now be used to credit for the fruit requirement. Once the weekly grain requirement is met, schools may use 1 oz, or ¼ cup of pulses, to credit towards the grain requirement at breakfast.
<p>Smoothies</p> <p>Chickpeas, beans, lentils and split peas may be added to smoothies and credit towards the vegetable requirements at 50% of the volume used. No more than 50% of the weekly vegetable requirement may be served in smoothies.³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For instance, ½ cup pureed chickpeas = ½ cup vegetable credit. 		 <p>Flour made from pulse products such as chickpeas, dry peas, beans or lentils will credit toward the meat/meat alternate category when served with an additional meat/meat alternate, like cheese.</p>	

¹ USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Nutrition standards in the national school lunch and breakfast programs; final rule. January 2012.

² USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Crediting pasta products made of vegetable flour in the child nutrition programs. April 2019.

³ USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Smoothies offered in child nutrition programs – revised. July 2015.

Nutrition Profile

Pulses, no matter the variety, provide your students with high-quality, plant-based nutrition. Pulses are a good source of plant-based protein and an excellent source of fiber per ½-cup serving.

Pulses fill student bellies

A good source of plant-based protein and an excellent source of fiber.





Naturally low in sodium

Helping you to meet National School Lunch Program Guidelines.

Packed with key micronutrients

Pulses contain iron, are high in antioxidants and are a good source of potassium.



1 SERVING = 1/2 CUP COOKED	Beans 	Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans) 	Lentils 	Dry Peas 
Calories	122	134	115	116
Fat (g)	0.6	2.2	<0.5	0.4
Cholesterol (mg)	0	0	0	0
Protein (g)	7.7	7.3	8.9	8.3
Iron (mg)	1.8	2.4	3.3	1.3
Fiber (g)	7.7	6.2	7.8	8.1

Purchasing Pulses

Several varieties of pulses are available through the USDA Foods Available List, including canned black beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans) and canned and dried pinto beans. Other pulse varieties and pulse products like hummus, dips and pasta are available through your foodservice distributor. Pulses are **one of the most cost-effective meat/meat alternate sources** that meet the National School Lunch Program meal requirements. On average, pulses cost about 10 cents per serving.



Serving Pulses

Pulses are a cost-effective way to add new kid-friendly flavors to your school menu. Pulses provide a canvas to explore global cuisine and flavors with your students. They've been everywhere — from regional American staples like chili to international favorites like hummus, curry and many more, pulses fit in every cuisine!

Here are global flavor pairings to spark menu ideas

1. Roasted Chickpeas + Masala
2. Hearty Lentils + Taco seasoning
3. Sautéed Black Beans + Chipotle
4. Warmed Chickpeas + Buffalo sauce
5. Stewed Kidney Beans + Cajun seasoning
6. Warmed Split Peas + Orange sauce
7. Mashed Lentils + Tomato sauce

Turn-key Recipes

Visit usapulses.org/schools for recipes and resources from the American Pulse Association such as:

- Cowboy Beans and Cornbread
- Nacho Average Lentil Taco
- Blazin' Buffalo Chickpea Shaker Salad
- Rockin' Ranch Hummus
- Farmer's Meatball Grinder
- "Peas on Earth" Taco Salad
- Southwest Sloppy Joes
- Orange Sriracha Protein Bowl

