

**Families:**

Pilot Light Family Meal Lessons are designed to easily bring food education into your home. We recommend using the Family Resources in the following way:

1. Watch the Family Meal video for the lesson as a family.
2. Make the recipe as a family.
3. In the Common Core Connections section, children can learn through and about food while strengthening Common Core English Language Arts or Math skills.
4. Family Discussion questions and Extension Activities are provided to allow learners of all ages opportunities to participate in the learning experience!



**Pilot Light Family Lesson**

**Lentil Soup**

**+ Grades 7-8 Common Core English Language Arts - Reading  
Informational Text**

**Suggested Recipe Age Range: 12 and up (with adult supervision)**

**Recipe:****Lentil Soup****Ingredients:**

- 1 cup of dried lentils
- 32 oz. water
- ½ medium sized onion (approximately ½ cup)
- 1 Roma tomato (any type will work)
- 2 Tbsp. of Caldo de Pollo (chicken bouillon)
- Black pepper
- Small handful of cilantro
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp. curry
- ½ tsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. chili powder

**Materials:**

- Cutting board
- Colander
- Sharp cutting knife
- Large 4 quart cooking pot.
- Blender or Bullet-type blender

- Ladle
- Wooden spoon
- Large glass bowl or pot (for blended ingredients). 32 oz. capacity is fine.

Directions:

1. Wash the lentils thoroughly under cool water. A good way to do this is to put the lentils in the pot, fill it with cool water, and then drain the water through the colander. Or, keep rinsing the lentils off while in the colander.
2. Place washed lentils in the cooking pot. Add 32 oz. of fresh water.
3. Begin cooking on stove, semi-covered on medium high heat (with a gap left open by the lid). This is very important. You want what is in the pot to breathe a little bit while boiling. Otherwise, it will boil over and cause quite the mess! So keep your eye on this to avoid this very common situation. If the ingredients are boiling too much, just turn the heat down a little bit. If water seems to be evaporating too quickly, just add more. Bring and keep on a slow and steady boil.
4. Boil the lentils for approximately 45 minutes or so. You know the lentils are fully cooked if they are all soft when tasting/sampling texture.
5. Time to blend! First put the onion, tomato, and Caldo de Pollo in the blender. Fill blender to capacity with an even mix of lentils and water from the pot (use the ladle for this). Blend for 20 seconds.
6. Pour blended ingredients into the bowl or pot you have on the side.
7. You will have more lentils and water in the pot, so repeat step 5, but without the onion and other ingredients. Blend that mix. Pour into bowl or pot.
8. Continue until all lentils and water are blended. Place everything back into the original cooking pot.
9. Add cilantro (wash thoroughly and minimize stems) and other spices. Using the wooden spoon, stir in all ingredients while placing this all on a medium-low heat. You want all of this to cook slowly for another 15 or 20 minutes.
10. For lentil soup only: Another option for this recipe at this point is to add some eggs to the soup. Ever hear of egg drop soup? What you do here is while the soup is simmering at a low boil, you just crack 3 or 4 eggs into the soup – just like that (one per person). Do not stir. Let them just cook where they are for the 15-20 minutes. Then stir.
11. Remove from heat and serve.

Notes:

- This is a very basic soup recipe that is very easy to make. The same process can be followed for split pea or 16 bean soup. All you have to do is substitute the legumes or beans you wish to use.
- This dish is a very inexpensive and nutrient-rich dish. It goes great with tortilla chips, avocado toast, or tortillas with farmer's/ranchero cheese and salsa. It's great for cold winter days.
- This basic lentil soup recipe can be the base for many other options. If you want to get even fancier, you can add chunks of chicken breast, potatoes and carrots, and any other vegetable you sense will blend well with the mix.
- This is a good crock-pot type of meal also. All you have to do is make sure the lentils or beans are washed well before you cook them. Just note – whatever the volume of

lentils, peas, or beans are used – use 4x that volume with water (i.e. 8oz. of lentils requires 32 oz. of water).

- Lastly, if you want the soup thinner, just add more water and season to taste if necessary with the bouillon. If you like it thicker, obviously you'll be using less water while cooking. This all takes a little bit of practice, but it's really quite easy to make, and once you know how to make soup like this, you will be surprised at how many soups you'll be able to make from scratch using these basic steps. Enjoy!

### Common Core Connections:

#### Grades 7 and 8 Common Core English Language Arts - Reading Informational Text

**RI.8.1:** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**Objective of this standard:** Students will be able to refer to text and provide relevant examples from text that support written statements or claims.

**RI.8.2:** Determine the central idea of the text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Objective of this standard:** Students will become adept at locating important information required to satisfy inquiry as well as be able to summarize important points of facts using the student's own words.

**RI.8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**Objective of this standard:** Students will explore problematic vocabulary and learn the meaning of words, terms, and other figurative language examples or devices used in text.

#### What does this mean?

Students will be able to locate and comprehend important information used in informational text, as well as identify main or big ideas in such text. Students will also explore many words or phrases that might normally appear confusing or confounding - and figure them out!

#### Materials needed:

- Article from "Medical News Today": "What are the benefits of lentils?" Medically reviewed by [Natalie Butler, RD, LD](#) on November 4, 2019 — Written by [Megan Ware, RDN, L.D.](#) <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/297638>
- Computer, laptop, or other technological device with a word processing software (i.e. Google Docs, Microsoft WORD, etc.).
- If paper and pencil/pen are preferred - paper and pencil.

#### Directions:

1. Read the article below or through the link carefully.
2. Respond to the questions or prompts provided at the end of the article.
3. Complete vocabulary exercises as directed.

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## **“What Are the Benefits of Lentils?”**

**by Megan Ware in *Medical News Today***

Lentils belong to the legume family. They resemble a tiny bean, grow in pods, and come in red, brown, black, and green varieties. They also contain high levels of protein and fiber. Lentils are relatively quick and easy to prepare, and their low cost makes them an accessible form of high quality protein for many people around the world.

In this article, we look at how lentils can boost health, investigate their nutritional content, and look at ways to incorporate them into a balanced diet.

### **Benefits**

Consuming all types of plant based foods has associations with a reduced risk of many lifestyle-related health conditions. A [2019 study](#) in the Journal of the American Heart Association found that people who eat more healthful plant foods have a lower chance of dying from cardiovascular disease and all causes. Plant based foods often provide a wide range of fiber, [vitamins](#), and minerals, and may contain [antioxidant](#) properties. Antioxidants work against free radicals, which are compounds in the body that may contribute to [inflammation](#) and [cancer](#).

### **Heart health**

Lentils are a plentiful source of fiber, [folic acid](#), and [potassium](#). These nutrients all support heart health. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), increased fiber intake can [reduce levels](#) of low density lipoprotein (LDL) [cholesterol](#), or bad cholesterol. Not only does fiber have links to a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease, but it might slow the progression of the disease in high risk individuals. Lentils add essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber to the diet. They also provide protein and are an excellent replacement for meat in meals. When a person replaces meat in the diet with a high fiber food, such as lentils, they decrease their risk of [heart disease](#). Studies have found that the potassium, [calcium](#), and [magnesium](#) in lentils can decrease [blood pressure](#) naturally. Foods high in these minerals form [a key part](#) of the DASH eating plan. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) recommend this diet for bringing down blood pressure. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), lentils are one of the [best food sources](#) for potassium.

### **Pregnancy**

Lentils provide a large amount of [folate](#). Folate is critical for [preventing neural tube defects](#) in newborns. This essential vitamin can also reduce the risk of gestational [diabetes](#). A [2019 study](#) of 14,553 pregnant women found that those who took more folate during pregnancy were less likely to develop gestational diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that females of childbearing age consume a minimum of [400 micrograms \(mcg\)](#) of folate or folic acid every day. The CDC advise that women increase intake during pregnancy and breastfeeding.



## Cancer

Lentils also provide [selenium](#). Selenium may decrease the rates that tumors grow. It [may also improve](#) a person's immune response to infection by stimulating the production of T cells. T cells kill disease. The NIH note that selenium may help reduce rates of colorectal, prostate, lung, bladder, skin, esophageal, and gastric cancers. However, scientists must carry out further research into the cancer preventing benefits of selenium, as studies on the mineral have, so far, produced mixed results. A [2019 meta-analysis](#) of 405 articles suggests that fiber may also have links to a lowered risk of [colorectal cancer](#).

## Fighting fatigue

Iron deficiency is a common cause of [fatigue](#). Not getting enough iron in the diet can affect how efficiently the body uses energy. There are two types of iron: heme and nonheme. Plants provide nonheme iron, and lentils are a particularly good source. Meat and fish [provide heme iron](#). Nonheme iron is an essential form of iron for people who do not consume meat for health or other reasons. However, the body cannot absorb nonheme iron as well as heme iron. So, try combining it with vitamin C rich foods, such as citrus, berries, and peppers, which will improve absorption.

## Digestion, regularity, and satiety

Adequate fiber intake serves as an important factor in weight loss by functioning as a “bulking agent” in the digestive system. Fiber in the diet helps to [increase the feeling of fullness](#) and reduce appetite. This can reduce a person's overall calorie intake. The high fiber content in lentils also helps keep the digestive tract healthy, which in turn, prevents [constipation](#) and promotes regular bowel movements.

## Nutrition

Lentils are a highly nutritious food. They are rich in minerals, protein, and fiber.

100 grams (g) of cooked lentils [contains](#):

- 116 [calories](#) (kcal)
- 9.02 g of protein
- 0.38 g of fat
- 20.13 g of [carbohydrates](#), including 7.9 g of fiber and 1.8 g of sugar

Lentils also provide the following essential nutrients:

- folate
- iron
- manganese
- phosphorus
- thiamin
- potassium
- vitamin B-6

Lentils are also a source of:

- riboflavin
- niacin
- pantothenic acid

- magnesium
- zinc
- [copper](#)
- selenium

### **Types**

There are three main types of lentils in the United States. These include:

- Brown lentils: These have a mild, earthy flavor, hold their shape well, but will become mushy when overcooked. These work great in soups and as a stand-alone side. They range in color from light brown to black.
- French green, or Puy, lentils: These have a peppery taste and a crunchy texture that can make for a satisfying salad.
- Red lentils: These are common in Middle Eastern or Indian cuisine and are actually brown Massor lentils after the removal of their hulls.

Other types include black Beluga lentils, which resemble caviar, and are more expensive. White lentils, which are black lentils without the hull, and Macchiados lentils, which have a distinctive strong, nutty taste and often feature in Mexican dishes.

### **Diet:**

People can use brown, green, or red lentils in their diet in a variety of ways.

- Brown lentils are the cheapest and soften the most upon cooking. They work best in soups and stews.
- Green lentils have a nuttier flavor. They stay firm when cooked and make good salad or taco toppers.
- Red lentils have a milder taste. They are great for bulking out Indian dals and purees and are also soft when cooked.

Unlike dried beans, lentils do not require soaking. People should rinse away any dirt from the lentils and discard any damaged lentils or foreign material.

### **Quick tips:**

People can include lentils in their diet in the following simple and tasty ways:

- Add lentils to any soup or stew recipe for extra nutrients and fiber.
- Precook lentils, and keep them in the refrigerator for a quick protein source.
- Use lentils instead of beans in any recipe.
- Replace half the meat in a Bolognese sauce or lasagna with red lentils.
- Make a lentil dip by smashing cooked lentils with a fork and adding garlic, [onion](#), chili powder, and chopped tomatoes.
- Look out for new snacks and foods, such as lentil based crackers or chips and lentil pasta.

## Risks

Consuming large amounts of fiber may cause [flatulence](#) and constipation.

Any person increasing their fiber intake should:

- drink plenty of liquids to prevent constipation
- consume small amounts of fiber at each meal
- gradually increase their intake over 1–2 months

These tips can help prevent digestive discomfort as the body adjusts to the fiber increase.

Lentils also contain fermentable carbohydrates (FODMAPs), which may lead to digestive symptoms in those who have [irritable bowel syndrome](#) (IBS). Canned lentils are low in FODMAPs, and people with IBS typically tolerate them.

## Are lentils more healthful than beans?

Lentils have very similar health benefits as beans, but they have a few advantages. They are lower in phytates than beans. Phytates, decrease the body's ability to absorb micronutrients. In fact, red lentils may have less than 50% of the phytates than some low phytate varieties of corn, wheat, beans, and soybeans. Most people can include both beans and lentils in a healthful diet, and people on a low FODMAP diet can tolerate canned lentils well. Another advantage that lentils have over beans is that they do not need soaking, so do not take so long to prepare.

Article written by Natalie Butler, RD, LD from *Medical News Today*:

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/297638>

All content is strictly informational and should not be considered medical advice.

Medically reviewed by [Natalie Butler, RD, LD](#) on November 4, 2019 — Written by [Megan Ware, RDN, L.D.](#)

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## Specific Student Reading Comprehension Questions/Prompts:

1. What are the different types of lentils commonly found at the store?
2. Briefly explain 3 major benefits we can enjoy from eating lentils.
3. How are lentils specifically beneficial to heart health?
4. Name three minerals found in lentils that can help reduce blood pressure.
5. What are two ways that the fiber in lentils can contribute to weight loss?
6. Lentils are a good source of folate. How is “folate” beneficial to women who are pregnant?
7. What are two nutritional advantages that lentils have over beans.
8. How many calories are in 100 grams of cooked lentils?
9. How do you know lentils can be used as a low-fat food? Use a statistical fact from the article to support your answer.

10. How have you or your family eaten lentils before? How so? If not, how have you seen lentils served or eaten before?

**Vocabulary:** Look up the following words, terms, or phrases. What does each of them mean - OR - what are they? After writing down your definition, use the table below and briefly explain how these terms either help us, or hurt us (pick one only - “help” or “hurt” - no need to pick both).

1. Legumes
2. Protein
3. Fiber
4. Vitamins
5. Minerals
6. Antioxidants
7. Free radicals
8. Inflammation
9. Cardiovascular disease
10. Cholesterol (LDL)

VOCABULARY WORD/TERM	DEFINITION	HELP US? HOW?	HURT US? HOW?
legumes			
protein			
fiber			
vitamins			
minerals			
antioxidants			
free radicals			
inflammation			
cardiovascular disease			

Cholesterol (LDL)			
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**11. Bonus Vocabulary Question:** What type of cholesterol is actually good for us? How is this good for us?

**Student/Family Discussion Questions:**

**Families/children could discuss or write about:**

- Do you know what nutrients can be found in legumes and beans?
- What are the benefits that our bodies receive from eating such foods? How are these foods nutritious for us?
- Has anyone noticed that during the COVID-19 crisis or a different crisis or emergency, the shelves that usually pack items like lentils, split peas, and beans have been pretty emptied out? Why do you think that happened?
- Can you think of anything important that is not covered in this article? What might those things be?

**Extension Activities:**

**Here are some suggestions for additional activities that relate to this recipe:**

- Find a recipe you would be interested in making that has lentils as an ingredient and any of the following:
  - Try to make the meal.
  - Use lentils (and other legumes) to make a picture of that meal.
  - Create a mosaic using beans and legumes.
- Use lentils in an artistic way to show how you appreciate food/how your family appreciates food during this time.
  - Create a collage from pictures you can find on the Internet, in magazines, or other publications.
  - Feeling very artistic? How about create some characters out of these ingredients, and make a cartoon comic strip out of them (Idea: “The Adventures of Lenny the Lentil, Peter the Split Pea, and Brenda and the Bean Family...”)
- Research the uses for lentils in one culture of your interest, and write a reflection about what you learned

*This original Family Lesson was written  
by Pilot Light Food Education Fellow, Gary M. Werner.*