



## Easy Lentil Tacos

**Servings:** 2

**Prep Time:** 10 Minutes **Cook Time:** 20 Minutes

### Ingredients

- 0.5 tbsp oil
- 1/2 an onion, diced; about 1 cup
- 1/3 cup lentils, green, dried
- 1/2 packet taco seasoning
- 1 cups vegetable broth
- taco shells, for serving
- toppings, for serving

### Instructions

1. Heat the oil over medium-high heat in a medium size saucepan.
2. Add in the onion, and sauté until just tender and fragrant, about 3 minutes.
3. Add in the lentils, taco seasoning, and vegetable broth.
4. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer until the lentils are tender, and the liquid is mostly absorbed—about 15-20 minutes.
5. Spoon the lentil mixture into taco shells, and top with desired toppings.



## Healthy Eating for Older Adults

Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Services  
FNS-905-21 March 2022

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:

### Make eating a social event

Enjoy meals with friends or family members as often as possible. Take advantage of technology to enjoy meals virtually with loved ones in different cities or States.

### Drink plenty of liquids

You may not always feel thirsty when your body needs fluids, and that's why it's important to drink beverages throughout the day. Enjoy coffee and tea if you like, or some water, milk, or 100% juice.

### Add a touch of spice

Limiting salt is important as you get older. Fresh and dried herbs and spices, such as basil, oregano, and parsley, add flavor without the salt.

### Make the most of your food choices

Older adults need plenty of nutrients but fewer calories, so it's important to make every bite count. Foods that are full of vitamins and minerals are the best way to get what you need.

### Be mindful of your nutrient needs

You may not be getting enough nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin B12, and also protein. Read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods and also speak with your healthcare provider about possible supplements.

### Keep food safe

Discard food if it has an "off" odor, flavor, or texture. Refer to the "use by" dates for a guide to freshness. Canned or frozen foods store well if shopping trips are difficult.



## Lentils: The Big Health Benefits of Tiny Seeds

Source: Cleveland Clinic October 4, 2022

Lentils are rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber, without the fat or cholesterol of red meat. If you're trying to find a quick, nutritious dinner and wondering, "Is lentil soup good for me?" the answer is "yes." (The only decision is what color lentils to use!)

"Lentils have been around for ages, but it's taken a while for us to realize how powerful they are for our bodies," says dietitian Elyse Homan, RD. "They aren't just a cheap alternative to meat anymore. They can be the foundation for a variety of meals and make a real difference to your health."

Homan discusses the benefits of lentils and how they can support your health.

### What are the types of lentils?

Lentils are edible seeds of the legume family. Like beans and peas, they grow in pods.

The most common types are:

**Brown lentils** (European lentils): The least expensive type of lentil, brown lentils stay firm, making them an easy replacement for black beans in burgers and soups.

**Green lentils** (French lentils): These nutty-tasting lentils stay firm when cooked. They're especially good in salads.

**Red lentils:** The fastest cooking, this mild and sweet lentil gets soft when cooked, so you can use them in purees and Indian dals. (Lentils also come in shades of yellow and orange.)

**Black lentils:** The tiniest type, these lentils look almost like caviar. In fact, they're called Beluga lentils.

### 5 reasons lentils are good for you

A little goes a long way when it comes to the health benefits of lentils.

One-half cup of cooked lentils contains 140 calories and 12 grams of protein, with:

- 0.5 grams of fat.
- 23 grams of carbohydrates.
- 9 grams of fiber.
- 5 milligrams of sodium.

Lentils are high in protein, which helps build and maintain your muscles, bones and skin. Protein can also help you manage your appetite and support weight loss because it makes you feel fuller than other nutrients. Among beans, only soybeans have more protein. Eaten with a whole grain, lentils work as the protein equivalent of meat, which is especially helpful if you eat a vegetarian or vegan diet. Lentils are also gluten-free, making them a great option for those with celiac disease.

### What are the side effects of eating lentils?

Eat too many lentils, or undercooked lentils, and you may feel the effects — and anyone near you might hear them. Lentils, like some fruits and vegetables, contain fiber that's difficult for your body to break down. It also helps produce good bacteria in your gut. But too much can cause cramping and gas. To minimize these symptoms, Homan recommends gradually increasing your fiber intake.

### Are lentils safe for everyone?

You may also have a lentil allergy, especially if other legumes such as chickpeas give you an allergic reaction. A healthcare provider can help you find out if you have an allergy or food intolerance. If you want to add more lentils to your diet, talk to a provider about any other concerns.

### How to prepare lentils:

Lentils are simple to prepare and cook. You don't need to soak dry lentils overnight in water, unlike many other beans. Just rinse them to remove any dirt or debris. Toss any lentils that look rotten or damaged.

Red lentils cook quickly, usually in 5 minutes. Other types may need to cook for at least 20 minutes or more, so plan ahead. Put them in a pot covered with about a half-inch of water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered. Check often and add water, if needed.

Store dried lentils in a tightly sealed container in a dry, cool location. They generally keep for about one year. After cooking, they'll keep for about one week. You can also freeze cooked lentils for up to three months.