



Little Known Lentil Facts

Did You Know...

- **Thank the lentil** for the lenses in your glasses, or at least the name for them. Lens is Latin for lentil and the optical lens – a double-convex shape – is so-called because of its similarity to the shape of a lentil seed.
- **Lentils are “old time” food**; humans have been eating them for at least 13,000 years.
- During the 18th century, **peasants in Germany lived on three staples**: cabbage, rye bread, and lentils. Sounds like a little beer would go great with that!
- **Lentils as baby food?** A non-spicy stew made of yellow lentils is one of the first solid foods Ethiopian women feed their babies.
- **Happy New Year!** In Italy and Hungary, eating lentils – little coin-like seeds – on New Year's Eve symbolizes the hope for a prosperous new year.
- **A rainbow of colors?** Lentils can be any color from white to black including yellow, pink, red, brown, and green.
- Yes, **you CAN eat your way to a smaller carbon footprint**. Organic lentils have the lowest greenhouse gas emissions and require the least amount of water of the top 20 nutrient-dense and protein-rich foods you can consume.
- **Congratulations, Montana** — the nation's number one lentil producer! Organic lentils, grown without irrigation, flourish on just 12” to 14” annual rainfall.
- **Put on your apron!** The versatile little lentil can be used to make everything from soup, sprouts, salad, and stew to pudding, cake, and cookies.
- **Talk about playing multiple parts!** A lentil is a bean – its seeds grow in pods (genus: Fabaceae), a legume (a soil-building plant that converts atmospheric nitrogen into fertilizer for itself and other crops), and a pulse (the edible seed of a legume).

(Sources: Wikipedia, US Dried Lentil and Pea Council, Environmental Working Group, MediterraneanSnackFoods.com)

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P.O. Box 331 • Uln, Montana 59485 USA
www.timelessfood.com • 406-866-3340



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