

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

8 Chapters

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Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 1 · Know Your Pulses

SKILL GOAL

Tell the main pulses apart, choose between tinned and dried, and cook lentils and chickpeas simply and well.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Pulses are the dried seeds of plants in the pea family: lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas. They are cheap, filling, high in protein and fibre, and they keep for years in a cupboard. **Lentils** are the quick ones: red lentils collapse to a purée in 20 minutes and need no soaking, while green and Puy lentils hold their shape in 25 to 30 minutes, which makes them good for salads. **Beans and chickpeas** are bigger and need soaking and longer cooking, around an hour or more.

Tinned pulses are already cooked, so they are the fast, easy choice: drain, rinse and use. **Dried** pulses are cheaper, hold their shape better and taste better, but need planning. Keep the dried kind in a sealed jar away from light, and use within about a year, because old pulses never go fully soft. The next chapter covers soaking and the safe way to cook beans. Cooking Skills: Soups and Stocks 1, chapter 5 uses lentils and split peas in soups.

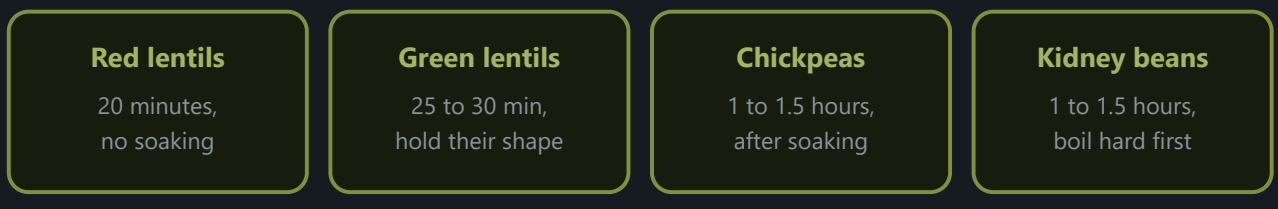


Figure 1. Lentils cook in 20 to 30 minutes; beans and chickpeas need soaking and an hour or more.

The method

- **Rinse dried pulses** in a sieve and pick out any small stones or shrivelled pieces.
- **Cover with plenty of cold water** (or stock) and bring to a gentle simmer, skimming the foam.
- **Simmer, don't boil hard,** because a rolling boil bursts the skins and makes a mush.
- **Taste to test:** a cooked pulse is soft all the way through with no chalky centre.
- **Season with salt and acid once tender,** drain, and dress while still warm so they absorb flavour.

PULSE	SOAKING	TIME (APPROXIMATE)	BEST FOR
Red lentils	None	20 minutes	Soups, dals, purées
Green or Puy lentils	None	25 to 30 minutes	Salads, side dishes, stews
Chickpeas	Overnight	1 to 1.5 hours	Hummus, curries, salads
Cannellini or butter beans	Overnight	1 hour	Stews, dips, bakes

BOILING OVER, TINNED PULSES, DIGESTION AND ALLERGENS

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A tinned bean rescue

10 minutes | 2 portions | turning a tin of beans into a proper dish

Tinned beans taste of the tin until you rinse them and give them some attention. Warm them with garlic, rosemary and olive oil, mash a few for body and finish with lemon. Pile onto toasted sourdough for a meal in 10 minutes.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

400 g	tin of cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
3 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
2	garlic cloves, sliced
1	sprig of rosemary
1	lemon, juice
2	thick slices of sourdough, toasted
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Warm half the oil with the garlic and rosemary in a small pan for 2 minutes, without browning the garlic.
2. Add the beans and 3 tbsp water, and heat gently for **5 minutes,** mashing a few against the side of the pan.
3. Remove the rosemary, season with salt and lemon juice, and spoon onto the toast with the rest of the oil.

TINNED PULSES AND ALLERGENS

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that

> cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

LEVEL 1 · QUICK

Red lentils in 20 minutes

25 minutes | 4 portions | cooking a pulse with no soaking

Red lentils turn into a soft golden purée with no effort. Cook them with a little cumin and garlic as a side dish or a base for later chapters. Skim the foam as it rises, and don't salt until they are soft.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

250 g	red lentils, rinsed
800 ml	water or vegetable stock, unsalted
1 tsp	cumin seeds
2	garlic cloves, sliced
1 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	lemon, juice
2 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Fry the cumin seeds and garlic in the oil for 1 minute until fragrant. Add the lentils and water and bring to a simmer, skimming the foam.
2. Simmer, stirring now and then, for **15 to 20 minutes** until the lentils have collapsed and the mixture is thick.
3. Season with salt and lemon juice and stir in the coriander. Add water if it is too thick.

BOILING OVER, HOT OIL AND DIGESTION

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building

> up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

LEVEL 2 · SALAD LENTILS

Green lentils with herbs

40 minutes | 4 portions | cooking lentils that keep their shape

Puy and green lentils hold their shape and have a peppery bite. Cook them with a bay leaf and a halved onion in unsalted water, drain while still firm, and dress with oil, lemon and herbs while they're warm. Serve warm as a side or cold in a salad.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

250 g	green or Puy lentils, rinsed
1	small onion, halved
1	bay leaf
1	garlic clove, bruised
3 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
1	lemon, juice
3 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 tbsp	chopped thyme

1. Put the lentils, onion, bay leaf and garlic in a pan with 700 ml cold water. Bring to a simmer and cook gently for **25 to 30 minutes** until tender but still holding their shape.
2. Drain, remove the onion, bay and garlic, and tip the lentils into a bowl while still warm.
3. Dress with the oil, lemon juice, herbs, salt and pepper, and taste.

BOILING OVER AND DIGESTION

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in

> tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

LEVEL 3 · FROM DRIED

A pot of chickpeas from dried

1 hour 45 minutes plus soaking | about 600 g cooked | soaking and cooking dried chickpeas

Home-cooked chickpeas are creamier and taste better than tinned, and the cooking liquid is a free stock. Soak them overnight, cook them with an onion and a bay leaf and keep them in their cooking liquid. Don't salt until they are nearly tender.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 600 G COOKED)

250 g	dried chickpeas
1	onion, halved
1	bay leaf
1	carrot, halved
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
1.5 litres	cold water, plus more for soaking

1. Rinse the chickpeas and soak in plenty of cold water for **8 to 12 hours** (overnight). Drain and rinse.
2. Put in a large pan with the onion, bay, carrot and 1.5 litres of fresh cold water. Bring to a boil, skim, then simmer gently, partly covered, for **1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes** until completely soft.
3. Add the salt for the last 15 minutes. Cool in their liquid, then drain and keep the liquid. Chill for 3 days or freeze.

BOILING OVER, STORAGE AND DIGESTION

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building

up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Rinsed or unrinsed tinned beans

Taste.

1. Taste a spoonful of beans straight from the tin and another after a good rinse.

Look for: Unrinsed beans taste salty and slightly metallic and have a slimy coating; rinsed ones are cleaner and take on flavour.

EXPERIMENT

Lentils salted early or late

Texture.

1. Cook two small pots of green lentils, one salted at the start and one at the end.

Look for: For lentils the difference is small, but the late-salted pot is easier to control, and the early-salted one can be a little firmer.

EXPERIMENT

Old or new dried pulses

Cooking time.

1. Compare a fresh packet of chickpeas with one that has been in the cupboard for years.

Look for: Old pulses take much longer and some never go fully soft; buy from a shop with a fast turnover.

EXPERIMENT

Cooking liquid kept or tipped

Flavour.

1. Cook a pot of chickpeas, then taste the liquid and mix some into a soup.

Look for: The cooking liquid is starchy and savoury; kept, it makes a good free stock, though it is not for everyone with digestive issues.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Tinned bean rescue				
Red lentils in 20 minutes				
Green lentils with herbs				
Chickpeas from dried				
Rinsed or unrinsed tinned beans				
Lentils salted early or late				
Old or new dried pulses				
Cooking liquid kept or tipped				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Pulses still hard	Old, or salt or acid added too early	Cook longer; add salt and acid when nearly soft
Lentils turn to mush	Wrong kind or boiled hard	Use green lentils for shape; simmer gently
Skins split	Boiled too hard	Keep to a gentle simmer
Beany or flat taste	Not enough salt or acid	Season with salt, lemon and oil at the end
Foam boils over	Pulses release foam	Use a big pan and skim
Wind afterwards	Under-cooked or a big portion	Cook until completely soft and start with small amounts

TINNED PULSES, DIGESTION AND LEFTOVERS

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can tell lentils, beans and chickpeas apart.
- ☐ I know which pulses need soaking.
- ☐ I can rinse and season tinned beans.
- ☐ I can cook lentils that keep their shape.
- ☐ I know to salt pulses once they are tender.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 2 is Soaking and Cooking: soaking, boiling safely and judging doneness.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 2 · Soaking and Cooking

SKILL GOAL

Soak and cook dried beans safely so they are creamy, whole and full of flavour.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Dried beans need **soaking** (8 to 12 hours in plenty of cold water) so they cook evenly, and soaking also removes some of the sugars that cause wind. After soaking, drain and rinse them and cook in **fresh water.** Bring to a boil, skim, then simmer gently until completely soft, from 45 minutes for small beans to 1.5 hours for larger ones. Keep the water level above the beans and top up with boiling water if needed.

Kidney beans need special care: after soaking they must be boiled hard for at least 10 minutes to destroy the toxin, and only then simmered (see the box). Salt toughens skins only a little, so add it when the beans are nearly tender. A pinch of bicarbonate of soda in the soaking water softens beans faster but can make them mushy and affect taste, so use it sparingly. For the soups in which beans are used see Cooking Skills: Soups and Stocks 1, chapter 5.

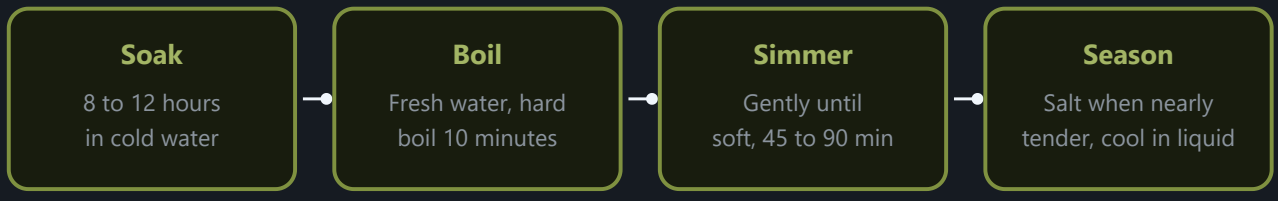


Figure 2. Soak, boil hard, simmer gently, season: the steps for any dried bean.

The method

- **Soak in plenty of cold water** for 8 to 12 hours; the beans double in size.

- **Drain, rinse and cook in fresh water,** never the soaking water.
- **Boil hard for 10 minutes** (essential for kidney beans), skimming the foam, then reduce to a simmer.
- **Add aromatics** (onion, bay, garlic, herbs) but no acid, which stops beans softening.
- **Salt when nearly tender,** then cool the beans in their liquid so they stay plump.

BEAN	SOAKING	TIME AFTER SOAKING (APPROXIMATE)	NOTES
Cannellini or haricot	Overnight	1 hour	Creamy, mild
Red kidney beans	Overnight	1 to 1.5 hours	Boil hard 10 minutes first
Black beans	Overnight	1 hour	Keep the dark liquid
Butter beans	Overnight	1 to 1.5 hours	Large, fragile skins

RAW KIDNEY BEANS, BOILING OVER, DIGESTION AND STORAGE

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A pot of white beans with aromatics

1 hour 30 minutes plus soaking | about 700 g cooked | cooking a creamy pot of beans

The foundation for stews, salads and dips. Soak cannellini beans overnight, cook with an onion, a carrot, garlic and herbs in fresh water, and salt towards the end. Serve warm with olive oil and lemon, or keep in the cooking liquid.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 700 G COOKED)

300 g	dried cannellini or haricot beans
1	onion, halved
1	carrot, halved
3	garlic cloves, bruised
2	bay leaves
2	sprigs thyme
1.5 litres	cold water
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
3 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil

1. Soak the beans in plenty of cold water for **8 to 12 hours.** Drain and rinse.
2. Cover with 1.5 litres of fresh cold water, add the onion, carrot, garlic, bay and thyme, bring to a boil, skim and simmer gently for **50 to 60 minutes** until completely soft.
3. Add the salt for the last 10 minutes. Cool in the liquid, drain, remove the aromatics and drizzle with oil.

BOILING OVER, DIGESTION AND STORAGE

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

> **Cooling and keeping stock:** stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

LEVEL 2 · SAFE

Kidney beans the safe way

1 hour 45 minutes plus soaking | about 700 g cooked | the hard boil that makes kidney beans safe

This is the one recipe where the boil really matters. After soaking, boil the kidney beans hard in fresh water for 10 full minutes, then simmer until soft. Never cook raw kidney beans in a slow cooker. Serve with rice, in a chilli or in a salad.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 700 G COOKED)

300 g	dried red kidney beans
1	onion, halved
2	garlic cloves, bruised
2	bay leaves
1.5 litres	cold water, plus more for soaking
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Soak the beans in plenty of cold water for **8 to 12 hours.** Drain and rinse thoroughly.
2. Cover with fresh cold water, bring to a rolling boil and boil **hard for at least 10 minutes,** skimming the foam.
3. Add the onion, garlic and bay, turn down to a gentle simmer and cook for **45 to 60 minutes** until completely soft. Salt for the last 10 minutes.

RAW KIDNEY BEANS, BOILING OVER AND DIGESTION

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building

> up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

LEVEL 2 · BLACK

Black beans with bay and garlic

1 hour 30 minutes plus soaking | about 700 g cooked | cooking beans in a dark, savoury liquid

Black beans cook to a creamy, almost chocolatey flavour, and their dark cooking liquid is part of the dish, so don't drain it away. Add smoked paprika and a little cumin for warmth, and finish with lime or lemon.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 700 G COOKED)

300 g	dried black beans
1	onion, finely chopped
4	garlic cloves, sliced
2	bay leaves
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	smoked paprika
1.5 litres	cold water
1	lime or lemon, juice
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Soak the beans for **8 to 12 hours,** drain, rinse, and cover with fresh water. Boil hard for 10 minutes, skim, then add the onion, garlic, bay, cumin and paprika.
2. Simmer gently, partly covered, for **45 to 60 minutes** until soft and the liquid has thickened. Add the salt for the last 10 minutes.
3. Finish with the lime juice, taste, and serve in their liquid.

BOILING OVER, RAW BEANS AND DIGESTION

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice

as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

LEVEL 3 · BATCH

A bean batch cooked and frozen

2 hours plus soaking | about 6 portions | batch cooking and freezing beans

Cook a big pot of one kind of bean, cool it and freeze it in tub portions, each with a little cooking liquid. A portion (about 240 g, equal to one 400 g tin) is ready in minutes. It costs a fraction of the tinned version.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 6 PORTIONS)

500 g	dried beans of your choice (not red kidney unless boiled hard)
1	onion, halved
2	bay leaves
3 litres	cold water
2 tsp	flaked sea salt
6	freezer tubs or bags
1	permanent marker

1. Soak, drain and cook the beans as in the earlier recipes (a 10-minute hard boil for kidney beans), salting near the end.
2. Cool quickly in their liquid in shallow containers, then divide into labelled tubs, each with about 4 tbsp of liquid. Leave a gap at the top.
3. Freeze for up to **3 months.** Defrost in the fridge or in a pan and reheat until steaming hot.

FREEZING, RAW BEANS AND STORAGE

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

Freezing and defrosting soup: cool soup quickly, then freeze it in labelled flat bags or tubs with a gap at the top for expansion, for up to about 3 months (general guidance). Defrost in the fridge overnight or in a pan over a low heat, and reheat until steaming hot. Soups with cream,

egg or potato may separate or turn grainy, so freeze the base and add cream or fresh potato when you reheat.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Soaked overnight or quick-soaked

Time.

1. Soak one batch of beans overnight and another by boiling for 2 minutes and standing 1 hour.

Look for: Overnight-soaked beans cook more evenly and stay whole; quick-soaked beans work but are more likely to split.

EXPERIMENT

Bicarbonate of soda or none

Softness.

1. Soak one batch with a pinch of bicarbonate of soda and one without.

Look for: The bicarbonate batch is softer and faster, but the skins can break and the beans taste slightly soapy. Use sparingly.

EXPERIMENT

Salt at the start or the end

Texture and flavour.

1. Cook two small pots, salting one at the start and one for the last 10 minutes.

Look for: Early salt gives better-seasoned beans with only a little change to the skins; late salt gives you more control. Both are fine.

EXPERIMENT

Stove or pressure cooker

Speed.

1. Cook the same beans on the stove and in a pressure cooker (if you have one), following the manual.

Look for: The pressure cooker cuts the time by about two thirds, with soft but whole beans; never use a slow cooker for raw kidney beans.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
White beans with aromatics				
Kidney beans the safe way				
Black beans with bay and garlic				
A bean batch cooked and frozen				
Soaked overnight or quick-soaked				
Bicarbonate of soda or none				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Salt at the start or the end				
Stove or pressure cooker				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Beans stay hard	Old beans, acid added early, or hard water	Cook longer; add acid at the end; buy fresher beans
Beans split or mushy	Boiled too hard or bicarbonate	Simmer gently; use less bicarbonate
Water boils over	Foam	Use a big pan, skim and keep the lid ajar
Flat flavour	No salt or aromatics	Add onion, bay and garlic; salt near the end
Beans wrinkled after cooling	Drained too soon	Cool them in their liquid
Freezer beans watery	Too much liquid	Drain a little before freezing

RAW KIDNEY BEANS, STORAGE AND DIGESTION

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can soak beans in plenty of water.

☐ I know to boil kidney beans hard for 10 minutes.

☐ I can simmer beans until completely soft.

☐ I salt beans when they are nearly tender.

☐ I can cook and freeze a batch of beans.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 3 is Dals and Bean Curries: cooking pulses to a soft, spiced sauce.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 3 · Dals and Bean Curries

SKILL GOAL

Cook pulses to a soft, spiced sauce and finish them with a sizzling tarka.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **dal** is a soft stew of split lentils, one of the great everyday dishes of India. The method is simple: simmer the lentils with turmeric until they collapse, whisk to a thick soup, and finish with a **tarka** (also called tadka or chaunk), a spoon of hot oil in which whole spices have sizzled, poured over the top at the last moment. The tarka gives aroma and punch that no amount of simmering can.

Bean curries use the same ideas with tinned or cooked beans: build a spiced onion and tomato base, add the beans, and simmer so the sauce clings. Chana masala (chickpeas) and rajma (kidney beans) are the best-known. For the sauce bases themselves see Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 3, and for rice to serve with them Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3. Red lentils cook fastest; yellow split lentils (toor dal) take longer and hold more shape.

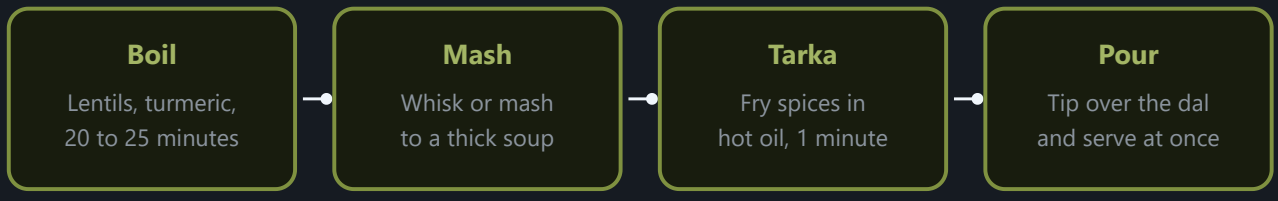


Figure 3. Boil, mash, tarka, pour: the stages of a dal.

The method

- **Rinse the lentils** until the water runs clear, then simmer with turmeric and no salt until soft.

- **Whisk or mash** to the thickness you like, adding hot water if too thick.
- **Heat oil until it ripples,** then fry whole spices for under a minute until they pop and smell fragrant.
- **Pour the tarka onto the dal** and cover for a minute, so the aroma is trapped.
- **Finish with lemon and fresh coriander,** and serve with rice or flatbread.

DISH	PULSE	BASE	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Tarka dal	Red or yellow split lentils	Turmeric, garlic tarka	35 minutes
Chana masala	Chickpeas (tinned)	Onion, tomato, spices	35 minutes
Rajma	Kidney beans (tinned or cooked)	Onion, tomato, ginger	40 minutes
Coconut lentil curry	Red lentils	Coconut milk, spices	30 minutes

HOT OIL, SPICES, COCONUT MILK AND ALLERGENS

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Hot coconut milk: coconut milk spits when it first hits a hot pan and boils over easily. Add it slowly, stir, and keep the heat at a gentle simmer, never a hard boil, or it splits and turns oily.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Tarka dal

40 minutes | 4 portions | a simple dal with a sizzling tarka

The foundation. Cook red lentils with turmeric and a little ginger, whisk until thick, then pour over a tarka of cumin seeds, garlic and dried chilli. Serve with basmati rice and a squeeze of lemon. Naturally vegan.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

250 g	red split lentils, rinsed
800 ml	water
½ tsp	turmeric
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
2 tbsp	rapeseed oil or ghee
1 tsp	cumin seeds
3	garlic cloves, sliced
1	dried red chilli (optional)
1	lemon, juice

1. Simmer the lentils, water, turmeric and ginger for **20 to 25 minutes,** skimming the foam, until completely soft. Whisk until thick, add the salt and keep warm.
2. Heat the oil in a small pan until a cumin seed sizzles. Add the cumin seeds, garlic and chilli and fry for **about 1 minute** until the garlic is golden.
3. Pour the tarka over the dal (stand back), cover for 1 minute, stir in the lemon juice and serve.

> **HOT OIL, SPICES AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot oil and spices:** a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

LEVEL 2 · CLASSIC

Chana masala

40 minutes | 4 portions | a chickpea curry in an onion and tomato base

A North Indian street-food classic, with tinned chickpeas to make it fast. Cook the onions until deep golden, fry the spices, add tomatoes and simmer until the oil separates. A pinch of garam masala and lemon finish it.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
2	onions, finely chopped
4	garlic cloves, grated
2 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	cumin seeds
1 tsp	ground coriander
½ tsp	turmeric
½ tsp	mild chilli powder
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
2	tins of chickpeas (400 g each), drained and rinsed
150 ml	water
1 tsp	garam masala
1	lemon, juice

1. Cook the onions in the oil for **12 to 15 minutes** until deep golden. Add the garlic, ginger and spices for 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes and cook for 8 minutes until the oil separates, then add the chickpeas and water and simmer for **15 minutes,** mashing a few against the side of the pan.
3. Stir in the garam masala and lemon juice and season. Serve with rice or flatbread.

> **HOT OIL, SPICES AND TINNED PULSES**

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

LEVEL 2 · KIDNEY

Rajma (kidney bean curry)

45 minutes | 4 portions | a thick, tomato-rich bean curry

Punjabi home cooking at its best: kidney beans in a thick, ginger-spiced tomato sauce, mashed slightly so it clings. Use tinned kidney beans (already cooked) or the beans you cooked safely in chapter 2.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1 tsp	cumin seeds
2	onions, finely chopped
3	garlic cloves, grated
2 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	ground coriander
½ tsp	turmeric
½ tsp	mild chilli powder
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
2	tins of kidney beans (400 g each), drained and rinsed
200 ml	water
1 tsp	garam masala
2 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Heat the oil, fry the cumin seeds for 30 seconds, then cook the onions for **12 minutes** until golden. Add the garlic, ginger and ground spices for 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes and cook for 8 minutes, then the beans and water, and simmer for **20 minutes,** mashing a few beans to thicken.
3. Stir in the garam masala, season and scatter with coriander.

> **HOT OIL, SPICES AND COOKED KIDNEY BEANS**

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

LEVEL 3 · COCONUT

A coconut lentil curry

35 minutes | 4 portions | a rich, creamy lentil curry

Red lentils cooked in coconut milk and spices, finished with lime and a quick mustard seed tarka. It is creamy without cream, and vegan. Keep the heat low once the coconut milk goes in.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	onion, finely chopped
3	garlic cloves, grated
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	ground coriander
½ tsp	turmeric
200 g	red split lentils, rinsed
400 ml	tinned coconut milk
400 ml	water
1 tsp	mustard seeds
10	curry leaves (optional)
1	lime, juice

1. Soften the onion in half the oil for 8 minutes, add the garlic, ginger, coriander and turmeric for 1 minute, then the lentils, coconut milk and water.
2. Simmer gently for **20 to 25 minutes,** stirring, until the lentils are soft and the curry is thick. Season.
3. Heat the remaining oil, fry the mustard seeds and curry leaves for 30 seconds until they pop, pour over the curry and finish with lime juice.

> **COCONUT MILK, HOT OIL AND SPICES**

Hot coconut milk: coconut milk spits when it first hits a hot pan and boils over easily. Add it slowly, stir, and keep the heat at a gentle simmer, never a hard boil, or it splits and turns oily.

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Red or yellow lentils

Texture.

1. Cook red lentils and yellow split lentils for the same time.

Look for: Red lentils collapse to a smooth purée in 20 minutes; yellow ones take longer and hold some bite, giving a more textured dal.

EXPERIMENT

Tarka at the start or the end

Aroma.

1. Make two dals, one with the spices fried first and one with a tarka poured at the end.

Look for: The end-tarka is more fragrant and sharp; the start-fried spices are softer and more blended.

EXPERIMENT

Ginger and garlic early or late

Flavour.

1. Add ginger and garlic to one curry at the start and to another near the end.

Look for: Added early they mellow and sweeten; added late they are sharper and raw-tasting.

EXPERIMENT

Mashed or whole

Texture.

1. Mash half the chickpeas in one pot, and leave them whole in another.

Look for: Mashed chickpeas thicken and make the sauce cling; whole ones keep a bite but the sauce is thinner.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Tarka dal				
Chana masala				
Rajma				
Coconut lentil curry				
Red or yellow lentils				
Tarka at the start or the end				
Ginger and garlic early or late				
Mashed or whole				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Dal is watery	Too much water or undercooked	Simmer longer and mash; reduce uncovered
Dal is thick as paste	Overcooked	Whisk in hot water
Bitter spices	Tarka burnt	Fry for under a minute; start over if black
Curry sauce is thin	Not simmered enough	Reduce, or mash some pulses
Raw-tasting spices	Added late to a cold sauce	Fry them in oil first
Split coconut sauce	Boiled hard	Keep to a gentle simmer

HOT OIL, SPICES AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook lentils to a smooth dal.
- ☐ I can make a tarka without burning it.
- ☐ I can build an onion and tomato curry base.
- ☐ I can cook beans in a curry sauce.
- ☐ I know to finish with acid and herbs.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 4 is Hummus, Dips and Falafel: smooth purées and crisp baked patties.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 4 · Hummus, Dips and Falafel

SKILL GOAL

Blend pulses into smooth dips and shape soaked chickpeas into crisp, fluffy falafel.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Hummus is chickpeas, tahini (sesame paste), lemon, garlic and salt, blended until it is pale and silky. The secret is softness: cook the chickpeas until they are very soft, even slightly mushy (add a pinch of bicarbonate of soda to the cooking water, or use tinned and simmer them for 15 minutes), and blend with a few **ice-cold water** splashes for 2 to 3 minutes, which makes it light and creamy. The same method works with any soft cooked bean.

Falafel are crisp herb and chickpea patties from the Middle East. They are made from **soaked but uncooked** chickpeas, ground coarsely with herbs and spices, which gives a fluffy centre; tinned chickpeas are already cooked and make a paste. Falafel are usually deep-fried, but baking at 200°C gives a lighter result with little oil. Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 1 shows how to cook chickpeas from dried, and chapter 2 covers soaking.

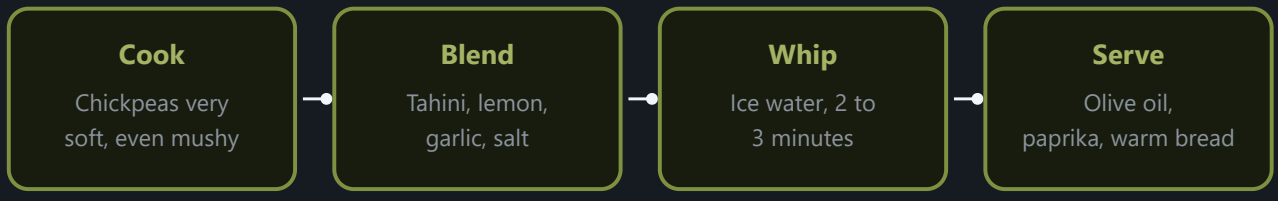


Figure 4. Cook soft, blend, whip with ice water, then serve with oil and bread.

The method

- **Cook the chickpeas very soft,** and drain them, keeping a little liquid.

- **Blend the tahini and lemon first** to a pale paste, before adding the chickpeas.
- **Add ice-cold water a spoonful at a time** while blending, for a light, smooth texture.
- **Season boldly with salt and lemon,** because a dip tastes blander cold.
- **For falafel, soak (don't cook) the chickpeas,** grind coarsely, chill the mixture, and bake until golden and crisp.

DIP OR SNACK	PULSE	FLAVOUR	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Classic hummus	Chickpeas	Tahini, lemon, garlic	15 minutes
White bean dip	Cannellini beans	Lemon, rosemary, olive oil	10 minutes
Baked falafel	Soaked dried chickpeas	Herbs, cumin, coriander	45 minutes
Beetroot hummus	Chickpeas, beetroot	Tahini, lemon, cumin	15 minutes

SESAME, RAW CHICKPEAS, BLENDER AND STAINING

Sesame: tahini is sesame paste, and sesame is one of the 14 major allergens. Check hummus labels, tell guests it contains sesame, and use clean utensils. For a sesame-free dip use extra olive oil and a little yogurt.

Raw chickpeas for falafel: falafel is made from soaked but uncooked chickpeas, never from tinned, which turns to paste. They are safe to eat only once the falafel is baked or fried all the way through, so cook until golden and hot in the centre, and don't taste the raw mixture.

Blenders and food processors: the blade of a food processor is extremely sharp. Unplug it before you take the bowl apart, never put your fingers near the blade, and use a spatula to scrape, not a spoon while it runs.

Staining: beetroot stains hands, boards and clothes. Wear gloves or rub your hands with lemon juice, use a plastic board, and wash up at once.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Classic hummus

20 minutes | 6 portions | a smooth, light hummus

Blend the tahini and lemon first until pale, then add the chickpeas, garlic and ice water. Simmering tinned chickpeas for 15 minutes makes them very soft, and leaves a creamier result. Serve with olive oil and paprika.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

2	tins of chickpeas (400 g each), drained and rinsed
1 pinch	bicarbonate of soda
4 tbsp	tahini
1	lemon, juice
1	garlic clove
½ tsp	flaked sea salt
4 tbsp	ice-cold water
2 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
1 pinch	smoked paprika

1. Simmer the chickpeas with the bicarbonate of soda in water for **15 minutes** until very soft. Drain, keeping 4 tbsp of the liquid.
2. Blend the tahini and lemon juice for 1 minute until pale, then add the garlic, salt and chickpeas and blend until smooth.
3. With the motor running add the ice-cold water a spoonful at a time and blend for **2 to 3 minutes.** Taste, then top with oil and paprika.

> **SESAME, BLENDER AND TINNED PULSES**
>
> **Sesame:** tahini is sesame paste, and sesame is one of the 14 major allergens. Check hummus labels, tell guests it contains sesame, and use clean utensils. For a sesame-free dip use extra olive oil and a little yogurt.
>
> **Blenders and food processors:** the blade of a food processor is extremely sharp. Unplug it before you take the bowl apart, never put your fingers near the blade, and use a spatula to

scrape, not a spoon while it runs.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

LEVEL 1 · QUICK

A white bean and lemon dip

10 minutes | 4 portions | a no-tahini dip from a tin

A quick dip for a sesame-free table. Cannellini beans are creamier than chickpeas and need no peeling. Rosemary gives it a Tuscan taste. Serve with raw vegetables or warm bread.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

400 g	tin of cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1	lemon, zest and juice
1	small garlic clove
3 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp	chopped fresh rosemary
2 tbsp	cold water

1. Put the beans, lemon zest and juice, garlic, 2 tbsp oil and the rosemary in a food processor.
2. Blend until smooth, adding the cold water to loosen.
3. Season with salt and pepper, spoon into a bowl and drizzle with the remaining oil.

BLENDER, TINNED PULSES AND ALLERGENS

Blenders and food processors: the blade of a food processor is extremely sharp. Unplug it before you take the bowl apart, never put your fingers near the blade, and use a spatula to scrape, not a spoon while it runs.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

LEVEL 2 · COLOUR

Beetroot hummus

20 minutes | 6 portions | adding a vegetable to a dip

Cooked beetroot turns hummus a startling magenta and adds earthy sweetness. Use plain cooked beetroot (not pickled in vinegar) and keep the other ingredients the same, plus a pinch of cumin. Wear gloves, because it stains.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

400 g	tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
150 g	cooked beetroot, roughly chopped
3 tbsp	tahini
1	lemon, juice
1	small garlic clove
½ tsp	ground cumin
3 tbsp	ice-cold water
2 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil

1. Blend the tahini and lemon juice until pale, then add the chickpeas, beetroot, garlic, cumin and salt.
2. Blend smooth, adding the ice-cold water gradually.
3. Taste, adjust the lemon and salt, and drizzle with the olive oil.

SESAME, BLENDER AND STAINING

Sesame: tahini is sesame paste, and sesame is one of the 14 major allergens. Check hummus labels, tell guests it contains sesame, and use clean utensils. For a sesame-free dip use extra olive oil and a little yogurt.

Blenders and food processors: the blade of a food processor is extremely sharp. Unplug it before you take the bowl apart, never put your fingers near the blade, and use a spatula to scrape, not a spoon while it runs.

Staining: beetroot stains hands, boards and clothes. Wear gloves or rub your hands with lemon juice, use a plastic board, and wash up at once.

> **Tinned pulses:** tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

LEVEL 3 · BAKE

Baked falafel

50 minutes plus soaking and chilling | 4 portions (12 falafel) | shaping and baking soaked chickpeas

Falafel must start with dried chickpeas soaked overnight, never cooked and never from a tin. Grind them coarsely with herbs and spices to a crumbly mix that just holds when squeezed, chill, then shape and bake with a little oil for a crisp outside and a green, fluffy middle.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

250 g	dried chickpeas, soaked overnight and drained
1	small onion, roughly chopped
3	garlic cloves
30 g	fresh parsley
30 g	fresh coriander
2 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	ground coriander
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
½ tsp	bicarbonate of soda
2 tbsp	plain flour
3 tbsp	rapeseed oil

1. Pulse the chickpeas, onion, garlic, herbs, spices and salt in a food processor to a coarse, crumbly mix (not a paste). Stir in the bicarbonate and flour and chill for **30 minutes.**
2. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) and heat a tray with the oil for 5 minutes. Shape the mix into 12 patties and lay them on the hot tray.
3. Bake for **25 minutes,** turning once, until deep golden and hot in the centre. Serve in pitta with yogurt and salad.

RAW CHICKPEAS, HOT OVEN AND BLENDER

Raw chickpeas for falafel: falafel is made from soaked but uncooked chickpeas, never from tinned, which turns to paste. They are safe to eat only once the falafel is baked or fried all the

way through, so cook until golden and hot in the centre, and don't taste the raw mixture.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Blenders and food processors: the blade of a food processor is extremely sharp. Unplug it before you take the bowl apart, never put your fingers near the blade, and use a spatula to scrape, not a spoon while it runs.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Skinned or unskinned chickpeas

Smoothness.

1. Make hummus from chickpeas with their skins on and another batch after rubbing the skins off.

Look for: Peeled chickpeas give a silkier hummus; leaving the skins on is quicker and tastes the same, but is slightly grainier.

EXPERIMENT

Ice water or plain

Texture.

1. Blend one batch with ice-cold water and one with room-temperature water.

Look for: Ice-cold water gives a lighter, paler hummus; room-temperature water is denser.

EXPERIMENT

Tahini amount

Flavour.

1. Make hummus with 2 tbsp of tahini and another with 4 tbsp.

Look for: More tahini gives a richer, nuttier hummus and a smoother texture; less is lighter and more chickpea-forward.

EXPERIMENT

Baked or shallow-fried falafel

Crispness.

1. Bake one tray and shallow-fry another in 1 cm of oil.

Look for: Fried falafel are crispier and darker; baked ones are lighter and use less oil but have a drier crust.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Classic hummus				
White bean and lemon dip				
Beetroot hummus				
Baked falafel				
Skinned or unskinned chickpeas				
Ice water or plain				
Tahini amount				
Baked or shallow-fried falafel				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Gritty hummus	Chickpeas under-cooked or not blended long	Cook them softer; blend 3 minutes
Bitter hummus	Old tahini or too much garlic	Use fresh tahini; use less garlic
Hummus too thick	Not enough water	Add ice water a spoonful at a time
Falafel fall apart	Mix too wet or not chilled	Chill, add a spoon of flour, shape firmly
Falafel dry inside	Overbaked or ground too fine	Keep the mix coarse; bake until golden, not dark
Falafel raw inside	Patties too thick	Make them 2 cm thick and bake until hot in the centre

SESAME, STORAGE AND LEFTOVERS

Sesame: tahini is sesame paste, and sesame is one of the 14 major allergens. Check hummus labels, tell guests it contains sesame, and use clean utensils. For a sesame-free dip use extra olive oil and a little yogurt.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can cook chickpeas soft for hummus.

☐ I can make a silky hummus with ice water.

☐ I know why falafel use soaked, not cooked, chickpeas.

☐ I can shape and bake falafel.

☐ I know which dishes contain sesame.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 5 is Bean and Lentil Salads: dressing pulses while warm and adding crunch.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 5 · Bean and Lentil Salads

SKILL GOAL

Dress pulses while they are warm, balance them with acid and crunch, and make salads that keep.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Pulses are bland until you season them, and they absorb dressing best while still **warm.** Dress cooked lentils or beans as soon as they are drained and the salt and acid soak in, instead of sitting on top. A good bean salad has four layers: the **pulse,** a sharp **dressing** (about 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar or lemon, plus mustard), something **crunchy** (cucumber, celery, radish, onion) and fresh **herbs** added at the end.

Tinned pulses are ideal here: drain, rinse and dress. Lentils keep their shape best of all; green and Puy lentils from Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 1 are the best for salad. Bean salads improve for a few hours as they marinate, and keep for 2 days in the fridge. For vinaigrettes in more detail see Cooking Skills: Vegetables 1, chapter 7.

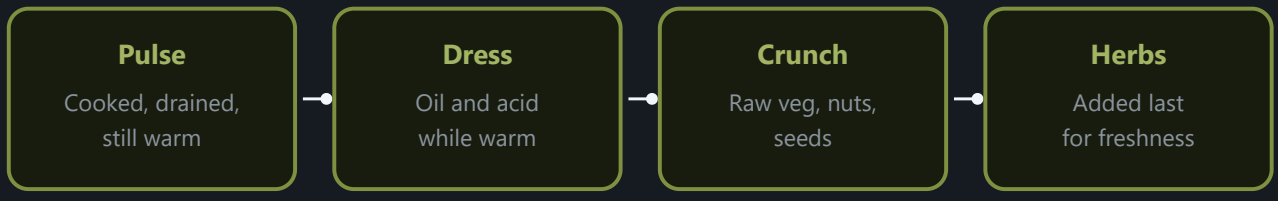


Figure 5. Pulse, dressing, crunch and herbs: the four layers of a bean salad.

The method

- **Cook or drain the pulses** and dress them while still warm.

- **Make a sharp dressing,** about 3 parts oil to 1 part acid, with mustard and salt.
- **Add something crunchy,** in small, even pieces so every forkful has some.
- **Let it stand** for 15 to 30 minutes so the flavours soak in.
- **Add herbs and any soft ingredients last,** then taste and adjust the salt and acid.

SALAD	PULSE	CRUNCH AND EXTRAS	DRESSING
Lentil and feta	Green or Puy lentils	Cucumber, tomato, feta	Mustard vinaigrette
Three-bean	Kidney, cannellini, green beans	Celery, red onion	Sweet-sharp vinegar
Chickpea and tomato	Chickpeas	Cucumber, parsley, red onion	Lemon and olive oil
White bean and tuna	Cannellini beans	Red onion, parsley, lemon	Olive oil and lemon

TINNED PULSES, TUNA, KEEPING SALADS AND ALLERGENS

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Tuna and who should limit it: tinned tuna is a safe, handy protein, but tuna contains more mercury than most fish. Current NHS advice is to limit it for pregnant women and women trying to conceive, and for young children, so check the latest guidance. Drain it well and use it quickly once the tin is open.

Raw onion and fresh herbs: raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well, use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A chickpea and tomato salad

15 minutes | 4 portions | a no-cook salad from a tin

The simplest pulse salad, and a good side for grilled meat or fish. Tinned chickpeas, ripe tomatoes, cucumber and plenty of parsley, dressed with lemon and good oil. The red onion mellows if soaked in the lemon juice for 10 minutes first.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

400 g	tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
4	ripe tomatoes, diced
½	cucumber, diced
½	red onion, finely sliced
2	lemons, juice
4 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
4 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Toss the sliced red onion with the lemon juice and a pinch of salt and leave for **10 minutes.**
2. Mix the chickpeas, tomatoes and cucumber in a bowl, add the onion and lemon juice and the oil.
3. Add the parsley, season, and leave for 15 minutes before serving.

TINNED PULSES AND KEEPING SALADS

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Raw onion and fresh herbs: raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well, use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Sharp knives: a sharp knife is safer than a blunt one because it needs less force. Cut away from

> your body, steady the board with a damp cloth under it, curl your fingertips on the food you are holding and put the knife down flat when you are talking.

LEVEL 2 · WARM

A lentil salad with feta

45 minutes | 4 portions | dressing lentils while warm

Cook green or Puy lentils until tender but whole, drain, and dress at once with mustard vinaigrette. Fold in cucumber, tomato, red onion, mint and crumbled feta just before serving. A very good lunch box.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

250 g	green or Puy lentils, cooked as in chapter 1 and drained
1 tbsp	Dijon mustard
2 tbsp	red wine vinegar
6 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
½	cucumber, diced
2	tomatoes, diced
½	red onion, finely chopped
100 g	feta, crumbled
3 tbsp	chopped mint

1. Whisk the mustard, vinegar and oil with salt and pepper. Tip the warm, drained lentils into a bowl and pour over the dressing at once. Leave to cool for **15 minutes.**
2. Add the cucumber, tomato and onion and stir well.
3. Fold in the feta and mint just before serving.

BOILING OVER, ALLERGENS AND KEEPING SALADS

Boiling over: pulses foam and boil over easily, and the starchy foam is scalding. Use a pan twice as big as the pulses and water need, skim the foam, keep the lid ajar and stay at the cooker.

Raw onion and fresh herbs: raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well, use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in

tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Allergens: contains milk (feta), mustard and sulphites (vinegar).

LEVEL 2 · CLASSIC

A three-bean salad

30 minutes plus marinating | 6 portions | a sweet-sharp marinated salad

An old-fashioned picnic salad: kidney beans, cannellini beans and green beans in a sweet, sharp vinegar dressing with onion and celery. It improves after a few hours and keeps for 2 days. No wine is used.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

400 g	tin of kidney beans, drained and rinsed
400 g	tin of cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
200 g	green beans, trimmed and cut into 3 cm pieces
1	celery stick, finely diced
½	red onion, finely sliced
4 tbsp	white wine vinegar
1 tbsp	sugar
4 tbsp	olive oil
3 tbsp	chopped parsley

1. Boil the green beans in salted water for **4 minutes,** drain and rinse under cold water.
2. Whisk the vinegar, sugar, oil, salt and pepper until the sugar dissolves. Mix with the beans, celery and onion.
3. Chill for at least **1 hour,** stir in the parsley and serve within 2 days.

TINNED BEANS, HOT WATER AND KEEPING SALADS

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Raw onion and fresh herbs: raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well,

use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

LEVEL 3 · PROTEIN

A white bean and tuna salad

15 minutes | 4 portions | balancing a creamy bean with a savoury fish

An Italian classic (tonno e fagioli). Soft cannellini beans, good tuna in olive oil, thin red onion and lots of parsley and lemon. Use the oil from the tuna in the dressing. Serve on toast or with leaves.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2	tins of cannellini beans (400 g each), drained and rinsed
160 g	tin of tuna in olive oil, drained (keep the oil)
½	red onion, very finely sliced
2	lemons, juice
3 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
4 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Soak the sliced onion in the lemon juice for **10 minutes.**
2. Mix the beans gently with the onion and lemon juice, the olive oil and a spoon of the tuna oil.
3. Flake in the tuna, add the parsley, season carefully and serve at room temperature.

TUNA, TINNED BEANS AND ALLERGENS

Tuna and who should limit it: tinned tuna is a safe, handy protein, but tuna contains more mercury than most fish. Current NHS advice is to limit it for pregnant women and women trying to conceive, and for young children, so check the latest guidance. Drain it well and use it quickly once the tin is open.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish,

and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Allergens: contains fish.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Dressed warm or cold

Absorption.

1. Dress half the cooked lentils while warm and half after cooling.

Look for: The warm-dressed lentils taste seasoned all the way through; the cold-dressed ones taste of dressing on the outside.

EXPERIMENT

Acid early or late

Texture and colour.

1. Dress green beans with vinegar immediately and others 1 hour before serving.

Look for: Acid dulls green vegetables over time; the late-dressed beans stay bright, while the early-dressed ones turn olive.

EXPERIMENT

Tinned or home-cooked

Texture.

1. Make the same salad from tinned chickpeas and from chickpeas you cooked yourself.

Look for: Home-cooked beans are firmer and creamier and taste better, but tinned are faster and more consistent.

EXPERIMENT

Herbs at the start or the end

Freshness.

1. Add parsley to one bowl at the start and to another at the end.

Look for: Herbs added at the start go dark and soft; those added at the end stay green and fragrant.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Chickpea and tomato salad				
Lentil salad with feta				
Three-bean salad				
White bean and tuna salad				
Dressed warm or cold				
Acid early or late				
Tinned or home-cooked				
Herbs at the start or the end				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Bland salad	Not enough salt or acid	Season while warm; add lemon or vinegar to taste
Mushy lentils	Overcooked	Cook green or Puy lentils just until tender

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Watery salad	Wet tomatoes or cucumber	Seed the tomatoes and salt the cucumber and drain
Harsh raw onion	Too strong	Soak it in lemon juice or vinegar for 10 minutes
Salad goes dull	Acid on green vegetables for too long	Add the herbs and dressing close to serving
Beany flavour	Tinned liquid not rinsed	Rinse well

KEEPING SALADS, TUNA AND LEFTOVERS

Raw onion and fresh herbs: raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well, use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Tuna and who should limit it: tinned tuna is a safe, handy protein, but tuna contains more mercury than most fish. Current NHS advice is to limit it for pregnant women and women trying to conceive, and for young children, so check the latest guidance. Drain it well and use it quickly once the tin is open.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can dress pulses while they are warm.
- ☐ I can make a balanced vinaigrette.
- ☐ I know how to add crunch.
- ☐ I can make a bean salad that keeps for 2 days.
- ☐ I add herbs last.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 6 is Stews, Bakes and Chilli: slow-cooked pulse dishes with depth.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 6 · Stews, Bakes and Chilli

SKILL GOAL

Slow-cook pulses with tomato and spices into thick, deeply flavoured stews that improve overnight.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Pulses and long, slow cooking are made for each other. A stew gives the beans time to take up flavour from **tomato, spices and smoked paprika,** while they thicken the sauce from within. The method is always: soften the base, fry the spices, add tomatoes and stock, add the beans and simmer. A **bake** does the same in the oven, in a covered dish, with less watching.

Four flavour tricks: **smoked paprika** gives a campfire taste without meat, **tomato paste** fried for a minute deepens the sauce, a spoon of **sugar or syrup** balances the acid, and a splash of **vinegar** at the end brightens everything. Chilli con carne with beef is in Cooking Skills: Beef and Steak 1, chapter 6; for a meaty version of the chilli here, brown 400 g of mince first, then follow the recipe. All use no alcohol.

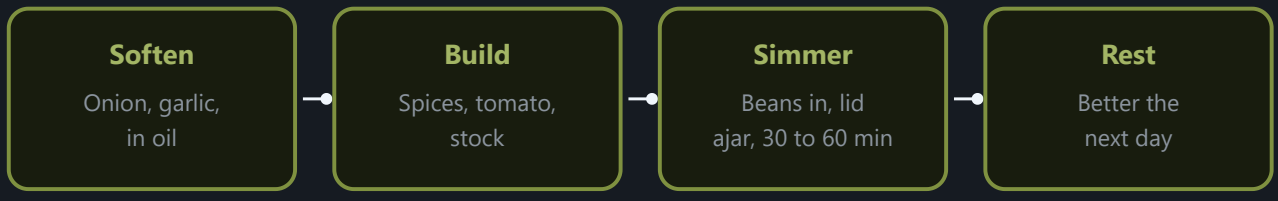


Figure 6. Soften, build, simmer and rest: a bean stew.

The method

- **Soften the base slowly,** then fry the spices and tomato paste for a minute.

- **Add tomatoes and stock,** and simmer the sauce for 10 minutes before the beans go in.
- **Add the beans and simmer with the lid ajar** until thick, stirring so it doesn't catch.
- **Balance with sugar and vinegar** at the end, then taste for salt.
- **Rest it,** ideally overnight; these stews improve.

DISH	BEANS	FLAVOUR	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Home-made baked beans	Haricot or cannellini	Tomato, brown sugar, vinegar	1 hour
Bean chilli	Kidney and black beans	Cumin, chilli, cocoa	50 minutes
Butter beans with feta	Butter beans	Tomato, oregano, feta	1 hour
Sausage and bean stew	Haricot or cannellini	Sausages, tomato, paprika	55 minutes

HOT STEW, HOT OVEN, RAW SAUSAGES AND ALLERGENS

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Hot oven and heavy dishes: a casserole or baking dish of bean stew is heavy and bubbling hot. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out before lifting, put the dish on a heatproof surface, and open foil away from your face because the steam scalds.

Raw sausages and meat: raw sausages and other pork must be cooked right through, with no pink inside and juices running clear, until about 75°C in the centre (general guidance). Keep them on their own board and plate, wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards, and never wash raw meat.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Home-made baked beans

1 hour | 4 portions | making a proper tomato bean sauce

The tin's big secret is how little you need: beans in a sweet, tangy tomato sauce. Use tinned haricot beans to make it quick, simmer until thick, and serve on toast. It is much less sweet than the tin, and you control the salt.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	onion, finely chopped
2	garlic cloves, grated
1 tbsp	tomato paste
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
2	tins of haricot beans (400 g each), drained and rinsed
1 tbsp	dark brown sugar
1 tbsp	malt or cider vinegar
1 tsp	Worcestershire sauce (or soy sauce)
1 tsp	smoked paprika
100 ml	water

1. Soften the onion in the oil for **8 minutes.** Add the garlic, tomato paste and paprika and fry for 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes, beans, sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and water and simmer, lid ajar, for **30 to 40 minutes** until thick.
3. Season to taste and serve on toast.

> **THICK SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Thick soups catch and spit:** a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Allergens: contains fish (Worcestershire sauce) and sulphites; use soy sauce to avoid fish.

LEVEL 2 · SPICE

A bean chilli

55 minutes | 4 portions | building depth without meat

Kidney beans and black beans in a smoky, cumin-spiced tomato sauce, with peppers and a teaspoon of cocoa for depth. For a meaty version brown 400 g of mince first. Serve with rice, soured cream or yogurt and coriander.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	onion, chopped
1	red pepper, diced
3	garlic cloves, grated
2 tsp	ground cumin
2 tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	mild chilli powder
1 tbsp	tomato paste
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
400 g	tin of kidney beans, drained and rinsed
400 g	tin of black beans, drained and rinsed
1 tsp	unsweetened cocoa powder
200 ml	water or stock
1	lime, juice

1. Soften the onion and pepper in the oil for **10 minutes.** Add the garlic, spices and tomato paste and fry for 2 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, beans, cocoa and water and simmer, lid ajar, for **30 minutes,** stirring, until thick.
3. Add the lime juice, season, and serve with rice and yogurt.

CHILLI, THICK SAUCE AND TINNED PULSES

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

LEVEL 2 · GREEK

Butter beans with tomato and feta

1 hour 15 minutes | 4 portions | baking beans in a tomato sauce

A Greek-style bake (gigantes), with large butter beans in a thick tomato and oregano sauce, baked until the top is slightly crusty, and finished with crumbled feta. It is the easiest recipe in the course: stir, cover and bake.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	olive oil
1	onion, chopped
3	garlic cloves, sliced
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
2	tins of butter beans (400 g each), drained and rinsed
1 tsp	dried oregano
1	bay leaf
1 tsp	sugar
100 g	feta, crumbled
3 tbsp	chopped parsley

1. Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5). Soften the onion and garlic in the oil for 8 minutes, add the tomatoes, oregano, bay and sugar and simmer for 10 minutes.
2. Stir in the beans, season, tip into a baking dish and cover with foil. Bake for **35 minutes,** then uncover and bake for 15 minutes more.
3. Scatter with feta and parsley and serve with bread.

HOT OVEN, HEAVY DISH AND ALLERGENS

Hot oven and heavy dishes: a casserole or baking dish of bean stew is heavy and bubbling hot. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out before lifting, put the dish on a heatproof surface, and open foil away from your face because the steam scalds.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also

washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Allergens: contains milk (feta).

LEVEL 3 · HEARTY

A sausage and bean stew

1 hour | 4 portions | browning sausages and building a stew

Pork sausages (or vegetarian ones) browned, then simmered with cannellini beans, tomato and paprika. Brown the sausages hard for flavour, then finish cooking them in the stew until no pink remains. Even better the next day.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	good pork sausages (or vegetarian sausages)
1 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	onion, chopped
2	carrots, diced
3	garlic cloves, sliced
1 tsp	smoked paprika
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
2	tins of cannellini beans (400 g each), drained and rinsed
300 ml	stock, unsalted
2	bay leaves
3 tbsp	chopped parsley

1. Brown the sausages in the oil for **6 to 8 minutes,** lift out, and soften the onion and carrots in the same pan for 8 minutes. Add the garlic and paprika for 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes, stock, bay and beans, and return the sausages. Simmer, lid ajar, for **30 minutes** until the sausages are cooked through and the sauce is thick.
3. Check a sausage is cooked in the middle, season, and scatter with parsley.

> **RAW SAUSAGES, HOT PAN AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Raw sausages and meat:** raw sausages and other pork must be cooked right through, with no pink inside and juices running clear, until about 75°C in the centre (general guidance). Keep them on their own board and plate, wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards, and never wash raw meat.

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Simmered or baked

Texture.

1. Cook the same butter-bean stew on the hob and in the oven.

Look for: The oven version thickens evenly and has a slightly crusty top; the hob version is looser and needs stirring.

EXPERIMENT

Tomato first or last

Flavour.

1. Add tomatoes to one pot at the start and to another after the beans have softened.

Look for: Acid slows beans softening, so dried beans cooked with tomatoes can stay hard; for tinned beans the difference is small.

EXPERIMENT

Smoked paprika

Smokiness.

1. Taste a bean stew with and without a teaspoon of smoked paprika.

Look for: The smoked paprika adds a smoky, meaty depth; without it the stew is sweeter and plainer.

EXPERIMENT

A day older

Flavour.

1. Taste the stew the day it's made and again after a night in the fridge.

Look for: The next-day stew is thicker and more rounded, so add a splash of water when reheating.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Home-made baked beans				
Bean chilli				
Butter beans with tomato and feta				
Sausage and bean stew				
Simmered or baked				
Tomato first or last				
Smoked paprika				
A day older				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Stew too thin	Too much liquid	Simmer uncovered, or mash some beans
Stew sticks and burns	Heat too high, no stirring	Keep it low and stir; use a heavy pan
Flat flavour	No acid, sugar or salt	Add vinegar, a pinch of sugar and salt
Hard dried beans in tomato	Acid early	Cook dried beans soft first (chapter 2)
Greasy stew	Fatty sausages	Skim the fat off the top
Sausages pink inside	Not simmered long enough	Cook until no pink remains and juices run clear

HOT STEW, LEFTOVERS AND ALLERGENS

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Reheating soup: reheat soup only once, until it is steaming hot all the way through (bubbling for a couple of minutes), not just warm. Do not reheat soup that has been left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can build a tomato and bean sauce.

☐ I can use smoked paprika for depth.

☐ I can balance a stew with sugar and vinegar.

☐ I can bake beans in the oven.

☐ I know stews improve overnight.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 7 is Pulses as the Main Event: binding, browning and replacing meat.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 7 · Pulses as the Main Event

SKILL GOAL

Bind, brown and season pulses so they stand in for meat in satisfying main meals.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Pulses can be the centre of the plate, not only a side. The difficulty is texture: they are soft and wet and fall apart. The answer is the burger rule: **mash about half** (it acts as glue), leave the rest whole for texture, add a **binder** (breadcrumbs, oats or an egg), drive off excess water, **chill** the mix for 30 minutes and cook it over a medium heat so the outside browns before it breaks.

Meat gives savoury depth that pulses lack, so replace it with **umami**: browned mushrooms, tomato paste, soy sauce and smoked paprika. Browning matters. Lentils make a good mince substitute for sauces and pies (see Cooking Skills: Beef and Steak 1, chapter 6 for the meat versions of bolognese and cottage pie, and Cooking Skills: Pasta 1, chapter 6 for pasta sauces).

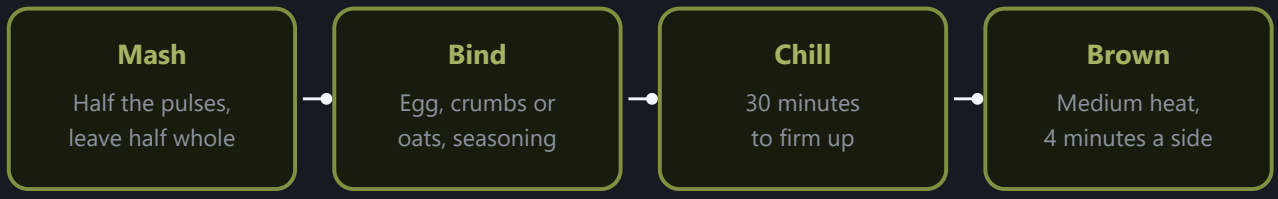


Figure 7. Mash, bind, chill and brown: how to make a pulse burger that holds.

The method

- **Mash about half the pulses** and leave the rest whole.
- **Add a binder and flavourings,** and pat the mix dry if it is wet.
- **Chill for at least 30 minutes,** then shape firmly.

- **Cook over a medium heat,** turning only once, so a crust forms.
- **Add umami** (mushrooms, tomato paste, soy) to replace the savoury depth of meat.

DISH	PULSE	BINDER OR BASE	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Black bean burgers	Black beans	Oats, egg, breadcrumbs	35 minutes plus chilling
Chickpea fritters	Chickpeas	Flour, egg, spring onion	25 minutes
Lentil bolognese	Green or brown lentils	Mushroom, tomato, carrot	50 minutes
Lentil and mushroom cottage pie	Green or brown lentils	Mushroom, mash topping	1 hour 15 minutes

HOT PAN, EGG, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Egg as a binder: eggs in burgers and fritters are cooked all the way through, so they are safe. Wash your hands after cracking, and don't taste the raw mixture. Young children, pregnant women and the elderly should have burgers cooked until firm and hot in the middle.

Hot oven and heavy dishes: a casserole or baking dish of bean stew is heavy and bubbling hot. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out before lifting, put the dish on a heatproof surface, and open foil away from your face because the steam scalds.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Chickpea fritters

25 minutes | 4 portions (12 fritters) | a quick pulse patty with a binder

The fastest of the four: tinned chickpeas mashed roughly with spring onion, spices, an egg and a little flour, spooned into a hot pan. Serve with yogurt, salad or in a wrap. Make the fritters small, because they are fragile.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2	tins of chickpeas (400 g each), drained and rinsed
4	spring onions, finely sliced
1 tsp	ground cumin
1	egg
4 tbsp	plain flour
3 tbsp	chopped coriander
3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	lemon, in wedges

1. Mash the chickpeas roughly, leaving some whole. Mix in the spring onions, cumin, egg, flour, coriander and salt.
2. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Spoon in the mixture in 12 small mounds and flatten.
3. Cook for **3 to 4 minutes a side** until golden and set. Serve with lemon.

HOT PAN, EGG AND ALLERGENS

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Egg as a binder: eggs in burgers and fritters are cooked all the way through, so they are safe. Wash your hands after cracking, and don't taste the raw mixture. Young children, pregnant women and the elderly should have burgers cooked until firm and hot in the middle.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also

washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens: contains egg and gluten.

LEVEL 2 · BURGER

Black bean burgers

40 minutes plus chilling | 4 portions | making a burger that holds together

The classic veggie burger. Mash half the black beans, fold in the rest with oats, cumin, smoked paprika and an egg, chill hard and cook gently. A cooked burger should be firm and hot in the middle. Serve in a bun with salsa and yogurt.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2	tins of black beans (400 g each), drained, rinsed and patted dry
1	small onion, finely chopped
2	garlic cloves, grated
60 g	rolled oats
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	smoked paprika
1	egg
2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
4	burger buns

1. Soften the onion in 1 tbsp oil for 6 minutes, add the garlic and spices. Mash half the beans, mix with the rest, the onion, oats and egg, and season.
2. Shape into 4 patties and chill for **30 minutes.**
3. Fry in the remaining oil over a medium heat for **4 minutes a side** until crisp and hot in the middle. Serve in buns.

HOT PAN, EGG AND ALLERGENS

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Egg as a binder: eggs in burgers and fritters are cooked all the way through, so they are safe. Wash your hands after cracking, and don't taste the raw mixture. Young children, pregnant women and the elderly should have burgers cooked until firm and hot in the middle.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Allergens: contains egg and gluten (oats and buns).

LEVEL 2 · SAUCE

A lentil bolognese

55 minutes | 4 portions | replacing mince with lentils

Green or brown lentils stand in for mince, with mushrooms, carrot and a spoon of soy for depth. Brown the mushrooms hard, fry the tomato paste, and simmer until thick. Serve over spaghetti. It freezes well.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
250 g	chestnut mushrooms, finely chopped
1	onion, finely chopped
1	carrot, finely diced
3	garlic cloves, grated
2 tbsp	tomato paste
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
200 g	green or brown lentils, rinsed
600 ml	stock, unsalted
1 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tsp	dried oregano
300 g	dried spaghetti

1. Brown the mushrooms in the oil over a high heat for **8 minutes** until dark. Add the onion and carrot for 8 minutes, then the garlic and tomato paste for 2 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, lentils, stock, soy sauce and oregano and simmer, lid ajar, for **30 to 35 minutes** until the lentils are tender and the sauce is thick.
3. Cook the spaghetti as the packet says, drain, and serve with the sauce.

> **HOT PAN, THICK SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot pan and hot oil:** roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof

surface and keep children away.

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Allergens: contains gluten (pasta), soya and celery.

LEVEL 3 · BAKE

A lentil and mushroom cottage pie

1 hour 15 minutes | 4 portions | a filling pie topped with mash

A comforting vegetarian cottage pie: brown lentils and mushrooms in a rich gravy, topped with fluffy mash and baked until golden. Make the filling thick, because a runny one makes the mash sink. The meat version is in Cooking Skills: Beef and Steak 1, chapter 6.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
300 g	chestnut mushrooms, chopped
1	onion, chopped
2	carrots, diced
2	celery sticks, diced
2	garlic cloves, grated
2 tbsp	tomato paste
200 g	brown or green lentils, rinsed
600 ml	stock, unsalted
1 tbsp	soy sauce
900 g	floury potatoes, peeled
50 g	butter
4 tbsp	milk

1. Brown the mushrooms in the oil for 8 minutes, add the onion, carrot and celery for 8 minutes, then the garlic and tomato paste. Add the lentils, stock and soy sauce and simmer for **30 minutes** until thick.
2. Boil the potatoes for 20 minutes, drain, and mash with the butter and milk.
3. Spoon the filling into a dish, top with the mash, fork it rough, and bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for **25 minutes** until golden.

> **HOT OVEN, THICK FILLING AND ALLERGENS**

Hot oven and heavy dishes: a casserole or baking dish of bean stew is heavy and bubbling hot. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out before lifting, put the dish on a heatproof surface, and open foil away from your face because the steam scalds.

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Allergens: contains milk, soya and celery.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Breadcrumbs or oats

Binding.

1. Make two small burgers, one bound with breadcrumbs and one with oats.

Look for: Oats give a chewier, more even texture; breadcrumbs make a lighter, crumblier burger.

EXPERIMENT

Chilled or not

Holding together.

1. Fry one patty straight after shaping and another after 30 minutes in the fridge.

Look for: The chilled patty keeps its shape and browns; the unchilled one slumps and breaks in the pan.

EXPERIMENT

Mashed bean amount

Texture.

1. Make burgers with a quarter, half and all of the beans mashed.

Look for: More mashing holds better but tastes pasty; half mashed is the best balance of hold and bite.

EXPERIMENT

Browned lentils

Depth.

1. Fry cooked lentils in hot oil for 5 minutes before adding to the sauce, and compare with unfried ones.

Look for: The browned lentils taste nuttier and meatier; unfried ones taste plainer and earthier.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Chickpea fritters				
Black bean burgers				
Lentil bolognese				
Lentil and mushroom cottage pie				
Breadcrumbs or oats				
Chilled or not				
Mashed bean amount				
Browned lentils				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Burgers fall apart	Too wet or not chilled	Pat the beans dry, add oats and chill
Burgers dry and crumbly	Too much binder	Add less crumb or a spoon of oil or yogurt
Bland burger	Not enough seasoning	Add spice, soy sauce and salt
Watery bolognese	Not simmered enough	Simmer uncovered until thick
Mash sinks into the pie	Filling too thin or hot	Thicken and cool the filling a little
Mushy lentils	Boiled too hard	Simmer gently and stop when tender

HOT PAN, OVEN AND LEFTOVERS

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Hot oven and heavy dishes: a casserole or baking dish of bean stew is heavy and bubbling hot. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out before lifting, put the dish on a heatproof surface, and open foil away from your face because the steam scalds.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can mash half the pulses for binding.
- ☐ I can chill and cook a burger that holds.
- ☐ I can add umami to replace meat.
- ☐ I can make a thick lentil sauce.
- ☐ I can top a pie so it browns and doesn't sink.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 8 is A Pulse Week: batch cooking, protein and freezing.

Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1

Chapter 8 · A Pulse Week

SKILL GOAL

Plan a week of varied, cheap, high-protein meals around pulses, cooking in batches and freezing the rest.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Pulses are one of the cheapest sources of protein there is, and they reward planning. The routine is simple: on one day cook a **big pot** of two kinds (say chickpeas and cannellini beans), keep half in the fridge for 2 to 3 days, and freeze the rest in portions. Add tinned beans and red lentils (20 minutes, no soaking) to fill the gaps. Variety comes from the sauce, not the pulse: the same chickpeas can be a curry, a salad, a dip or a fritter.

This chapter brings the whole course together: Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapters 1 to 7. Cooking Skills: Rice 2, chapter 7 pairs pulses with rice for a complete protein, and Cooking Skills: Soups and Stocks 1, chapter 8 shows how to freeze and reheat soup, which uses the same rules. The week below is a template; swap in your own favourites.

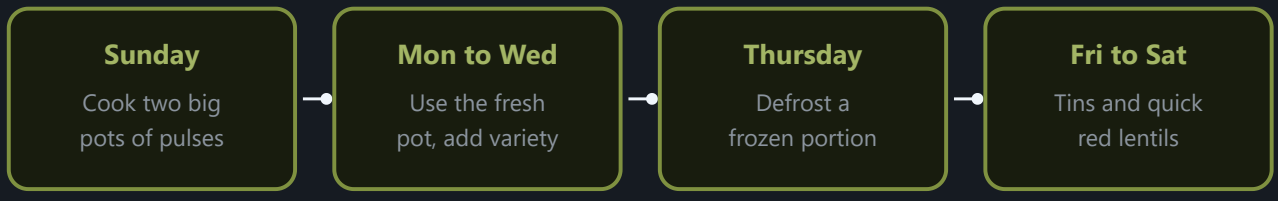


Figure 8. Cook once, eat all week: two big pots on Sunday, then tins and quick lentils.

The method

- **Cook a big pot of dried pulses** once a week, in two kinds if you can.

- **Cool quickly and chill** what you will eat within 2 to 3 days; freeze the rest in labelled portions.
- **Plan the sauces,** not the pulses: curry, salad, dip, stew and burger from the same base.
- **Keep tins and red lentils** in the cupboard for the nights you didn't plan.
- **Defrost in the fridge overnight** and reheat until steaming hot.

DAY	MEAL	PULSE	FROM
Monday	Chana masala with rice	Chickpeas	Chapter 3
Tuesday	Lentil salad with feta	Green lentils	Chapter 5
Wednesday	Black bean burgers	Black beans	Chapter 7
Thursday	Bean chilli with rice	Kidney and black beans	Chapter 6
Friday	Tarka dal with flatbread	Red lentils	Chapter 3

STORING, FREEZING AND ALLERGENS

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Freezing and defrosting soup: cool soup quickly, then freeze it in labelled flat bags or tubs with a gap at the top for expansion, for up to about 3 months (general guidance). Defrost in the fridge overnight or in a pan over a low heat, and reheat until steaming hot. Soups with cream, egg or potato may separate or turn grainy, so freeze the base and add cream or fresh potato when you reheat.

Reheating soup: reheat soup only once, until it is steaming hot all the way through (bubbling for a couple of minutes), not just warm. Do not reheat soup that has been left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A pulse supper for four

1 hour | 4 portions | building a whole meal around pulses

A bean chilli (chapter 6) with rice, yogurt, avocado and lime. It uses tinned beans and takes under an hour, and half of it can be frozen. Add a salad (chapter 5) for freshness.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	batch of bean chilli (chapter 6)
300 g	basmati rice
4 tbsp	plain yogurt
1	avocado, sliced
1	lime, in wedges
2 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Make the chilli as in chapter 6 and keep it warm. Cook the rice as in Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3.
2. Serve the chilli over the rice with yogurt, avocado and coriander.
3. Cool the rest quickly and freeze in portions for another night.

HOT STEW, STORAGE AND ALLERGENS

Thick soups catch and spit: a thick soup sticks to the base of the pan and blobs and spits when it bubbles. Stir often, keep the heat low, use a pan with a heavy base and a long spoon, and keep your face back.

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

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> **Allergens:** contains milk (yogurt).

LEVEL 2 · PLAN

A week of pulse meals

Planning: 20 minutes | 5 meals for 2 | planning a week around two big pots

Write a five-day plan using one big pot of chickpeas and one of cannellini beans, plus tins and red lentils. Mix cuisines: a curry, a salad, a burger, a stew and a dal. The shopping list shows the pulses; the vegetables are left to you.

INGREDIENTS (5 MEALS FOR 2)

250 g	dried chickpeas (cooked in a big pot)
250 g	dried cannellini beans (cooked in a big pot)
2	tins of black beans
2	tins of kidney beans
250 g	red lentils
1	pack of freezer tubs

1. On Sunday write the plan: the day, the dish, the pulse, and the chapter. Cook the two big pots and cool them quickly.
2. Chill what you'll eat within 2 to 3 days and freeze the rest in labelled portions.
3. Each evening cook the planned dish and tick it off. At the end of the week note what you'd change.

STORAGE, FREEZING AND DIGESTION

Cooling and keeping stock: stock is an ideal place for bacteria to grow. Strain it, then cool it quickly in shallow containers or an ice bath, chill within 1 to 2 hours, and use within about 2 days (fish stock within 1 day) or freeze it. Never leave a big pot to cool slowly on the hob or worktop overnight. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through.

Freezing and defrosting soup: cool soup quickly, then freeze it in labelled flat bags or tubs with a gap at the top for expansion, for up to about 3 months (general guidance). Defrost in the fridge overnight or in a pan over a low heat, and reheat until steaming hot. Soups with cream, egg or potato may separate or turn grainy, so freeze the base and add cream or fresh potato when you reheat.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that

cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Raw kidney beans are toxic: dried red kidney beans (and, to a lesser degree, other dried beans) contain a toxin that causes severe sickness if they are undercooked. Soak them, drain, then boil them hard in fresh water for at least 10 minutes (general guidance) before simmering until soft. A slow cooker does not get hot enough to do this safely. Tinned beans are already cooked.

LEVEL 2 · FREEZER

Freezing cooked beans

30 minutes plus freezing | 6 portions | portioning and freezing pulses

Cooked beans freeze beautifully. Cool them in their liquid, freeze them flat in portions of about 240 g (one tin) with a little liquid, and defrost or use straight from frozen in stews. One batch of dried beans costs a fraction of tins.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1.5 kg	cooked beans in their liquid (from chapter 2)
6	freezer bags
1	permanent marker
1	tray that fits the freezer

1. Cool the cooked beans in their liquid in shallow containers, then chill.
2. Portion about 240 g with 4 tbsp of liquid into labelled bags, press out the air and seal. Freeze flat on a tray for **2 hours,** then stack.
3. Use within about 3 months. Defrost in the fridge or tip straight into a stew, and bring to a boil.

FREEZING, REHEATING AND RAW BEANS

Freezing and defrosting soup: cool soup quickly, then freeze it in labelled flat bags or tubs with a gap at the top for expansion, for up to about 3 months (general guidance). Defrost in the fridge overnight or in a pan over a low heat, and reheat until steaming hot. Soups with cream, egg or potato may separate or turn grainy, so freeze the base and add cream or fresh potato when you reheat.

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LEVEL 3 · SIGNATURE

Your signature pulse dish

Your choice | your choice | designing a pulse dish from your favourite methods

Choose a pulse, a method (a curry, salad, dip, stew or burger), a flavour (spice, herb or sauce) and a side, and write the recipe as you cook it. Make it twice, changing one thing. A signature dish is one you can cook without a recipe.

INGREDIENTS (YOUR CHOICE)

1	pulse of your choice
1	method from chapters 3 to 7
1	flavour, sauce or spice mix of your choice
1	notebook and pen

1. Choose your pulse, method and flavour, and write them down before you start.
2. Cook it, noting quantities, times and what you would change.
3. Cook it again with your change, then write the final recipe on a card.

PULSES AND ALLERGENS

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Pulses and digestion: pulses contain sugars that some people find hard to digest and that cause wind. Soaking, discarding the soaking water, cooking until completely soft and building up the amount gradually all help. This is general information, not medical advice; talk to a doctor if you have a digestive condition.

Tinned pulses: tinned pulses are cooked and ready to eat once drained and rinsed, which also washes off much of the salt. Check the use-by date, never use tins that are bulging or leaking, and keep opened tins in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days rather than in the tin.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

A timed batch-cook session

Planning.

1. Cook two big pots of beans and one tray of roast vegetables while timing yourself.

Look for: Most of the time is waiting; use it to cook a second dish or tidy up as you go.

EXPERIMENT

Swapping the pulse

Flexibility.

1. Make the same curry with chickpeas, kidney beans and black beans.

Look for: Each pulse changes the texture and flavour; chickpeas are nutty, kidney beans soft and sweet, black beans earthy.

EXPERIMENT

Frozen against fresh

Quality.

1. Cook the same stew from freshly cooked beans and beans frozen for a month.

Look for: Properly frozen beans are nearly identical; badly wrapped ones are dry at the edges. Wrapping matters.

EXPERIMENT

Your own signature dish

Making it yours.

1. Cook your signature dish for a friend and ask for one comment.

Look for: A repeated dish improves every time. Write it down.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Pulse supper for four				
A week of pulse meals				
Freezing cooked beans				
Signature pulse dish				
A timed batch-cook session				
Swapping the pulse				
Frozen against fresh				
Your own signature dish				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Pulses go off in the fridge	Left too long	Use within 3 days; freeze the rest
Frozen beans mushy	Overcooked first or thawed slowly	Cook just tender; thaw in the fridge
Meals all taste the same	Same sauce every time	Vary spices, herbs and the cuisine
Plan falls apart	Too ambitious	Plan fewer cooking days and rely on tins and red lentils
Too much wind	Amounts too big, too fast	Build up gradually and cook until completely soft
Bland batch	Cooked without salt or aromatics	Salt near the end and add onion and bay

STORING, FREEZING AND ALLERGENS

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Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook pulses in a batch.
- ☐ I can plan a week of pulse meals.
- ☐ I can freeze and reheat cooked beans safely.
- ☐ I can make a curry, salad, dip, stew and burger from pulses.
- ☐ I have a signature pulse dish.

NEXT CHAPTER

Congratulations: you have finished Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1. A second pulses course is not yet planned; the series continues with the other cooking skills courses.