

How to use dried beans, chickpeas and lentils

Dried beans, chickpeas and lentils or legumes are the edible pods and seeds of peas, beans and lentils.

Legumes are rich in complex carbohydrate and are a great source of valuable types of fibre. They are low in fat, high in protein and provide high quantities of many vitamins of the B complex as well as being good sources of iron and other minerals.

They play an important role in health, as they can help in:

- lowering blood cholesterol levels
- controlling blood sugar levels
- regulating bowel function

In a vegetarian diet it is important to combine legumes with other plant foods to ensure an adequate supply of protein i.e. legumes should be included along with grains, seeds and nuts e.g. rice and lentils, corn tacos and beans, baked beans on toast.

Legumes are available dried or pre-cooked in cans e.g. red kidney beans, three bean mix, baked beans. They are sold in supermarkets and health food shops.

Using Legumes

Buying and Storing

Legumes are quite hardy and less susceptible to rancidity and pests than grains.

When buying legumes, look for uniform size, strong colour and a plump smooth appearance.

Store in an airtight container in a dry place for up to a year. For better flavour and texture, it is better to use them within two or three months.

After cooking legumes will last up to a week in the refrigerator, or they can be frozen for up to six months – beans freeze well.

Preparation

Legumes must be cooked correctly or they can cause flatulence in some people. This can be overcome by soaking the legumes very well, throwing away the soaking water and cooking them thoroughly. Eating small servings until the body becomes accustomed to legumes also helps to avoid flatulence.

Soaking

All dried beans (except canned beans, lentils and split peas) need to be soaked first before cooking.

Cooking legumes

Method 1 - Place beans in a bowl. Add water (3 - 4 times the amount of beans) and leave to soak overnight. Simmer until soft but not mushy – approximately 1 to 3 hours.

Method 2 - In a saucepan add beans and enough water to cover beans. Bring to the boil and simmer for 2 to 5 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to soak for 1 to 2 hours. Cook by simmering until soft – approximately 1 to 3 hours. NB: Do not add salt to soaking or cooking liquid.

Cooking Guide – dry beans, peas, lentils

Amounts of water, cooking time and yield are approximate but serve as a guide.

One cup dry	Water For both 1 hour hot water soak and cooking	Cooking time after soaking		Yield (cups)
		Simmer, covered, after bringing to the boil	Pressure cook after reaching 15lbs pressure	
Adzuki (Chinese red)	4 cups	45 minutes	Not recommended	2 2/3
Black beans	3 cups	1 1/2 - 2 hours	5 minutes	2 1/2
Black-eyed peas or beans (or cow peas)	2 1/2 cups	30 minutes	Not recommended	2 1/2
Cannelini beans	3 cups	1 – 1 1/2 hours	5 minutes	2
Garbanzos (chickpeas)	4 cups	2 hours or longer	12 minutes	2 1/2
Butter beans	3 cups	1- 1 1/2 hours	4-7 minutes	2 1/2
Kidney beans	3 cups	About 2 hours	3 minutes	2 3/4
Lentils, green or brown (soaking unnecessary)	2 1/2 cups	30-45 minutes	Not recommended	2 1/2
Lentils, red (soaking unnecessary)	2 1/2 cups	7 minutes	Not recommended	2
Lima beans, large	3 cups	About 1 hour	3 minutes	2 1/2
Lima beans, baby	2 1/2 cups	About 45 minutes	Not recommended	2
Mung beans	3 cups	30-45 minutes	Not recommended	3
Navy beans (pea beans)	3 cups	1 1/2 - 2 hours	7-10 minutes	2 1/2
Peas, split (soaking unnecessary for soup)	2 cups	30-45 minutes	Not recommended	2 1/2
Peas, whole	3 cups	1 1/2 - 2 hours	3 minutes	2 1/2
Borlotti beans	3 1/2 cups	1 1/2 - 2 hours	10 minutes	2 1/2
Red beans	3 cups	1 1/2 - 2 hours	8 minutes	3
Soybeans	3 1/2 cups	2 1/2 - 3 1/2 cups	30 minutes (dependent on age and variety of bean)	2 1/3

Freezing Legumes

After the legumes have been soaked:

- 1) Rinse and partially dry on paper towels
- 2) Spread in single layers on trays and freeze separately.

They are now ready to cook or store in plastic bags for future use. Often soaked and frozen legumes cook more quickly.

Microwave Cooking

Brown Lentils

– makes about 1 1/2 cups

1/2 cup brown lentils

2 1/2 cups boiling water

- Place the lentils and water in a large, deep, microwave-safe dish. Cover.
- Microwave on medium high for 6 minutes.
- Stir three times during cooking. Allow to stand for a further 6 minutes.
- Drain, if desired, and use in soups, casseroles and salads.

Garbanzo Beans (chickpeas)

– makes about 1 1/2 cups

1/2 cup garbanzo beans

2 cups boiling water

- Place the beans and water in a large, deep, microwave-safe dish. Cover.
- Microwave on high for 10 minutes.
- Allow to stand for a further 10 minutes to cook. Then stand 4 to 6 hours before using.

Uses of Garbanzo Beans:

- In stuffings, sauces etc. Remove the skins and chop either chunky or fine in a processor with the cutting blade.
- A replacement for nuts in cakes and on toppings.
- A replacement for meat in casseroles and soups.

Haricot Beans

– makes about 1 1/2 cups

1/2 cup haricot beans, soaked overnight

2 1/2 cups boiling water

- Place the soaked, drained beans and boiling water in a large, deep, microwave-safe dish. Cover.
- Microwave on high for 16 to 20 minutes.
- Stir at least two to three times during cooking. Allow to stand for a further 10 minutes.
- Strain and use as desired.

Adzuki Beans

– makes about 2 1/4 cups

1 cup adzuki beans

2 cups hot water

- Place the soaked, drained beans and boiling water in a large, deep, microwave-safe dish. Cover.
- Microwave on high for 40 minutes
- Let stand for 10 minutes. Drain.

Suggestions for Using Beans

- Lentils and beans can be used as meat extenders or meat substitutes e.g. chilli con carne.
- Make a bean sauce to serve over pasta or serve in a lasagne or to combine with a meat sauce in spaghetti bolognese.
- Use beans, vegetables and rice as a filling for cabbage rolls or stuffed capsicums.
- Mash beans with onion and other grated vegetables, herbs, spices and sauces to make patties or loaves e.g. lentil rissoles.
- Mash beans with low fat cottage cheese and spices to make pates and dips.
- Use beans, lentils or split peas when making soups e.g. pea soup, minestrone soup.
- Try sprouted mung beans or lentils as a crunchy addition to salads and sandwiches. Include cold cooked beans in salads.

Bean Recipes

Chilli Con Carne

450 gram can red kidney beans
1 onion, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon chilli powder
400 mls water
1 tablespoon tomato paste
500 grams minced steak
3 cloves garlic
2 tablespoons plain flour
500 grams tomatoes, tinned or fresh
Pepper

Fry the mince steak in its own juices, add the onion and garlic and brown evenly. Drain off any excess fat. Add chilli powder and continue cooking for a few minutes, stirring constantly.

Stir in the flour and then gradually add the water, tomatoes, tomato paste and season with pepper. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer for 1 1/2 hours. Stir the mince mixture occasionally during cooking time.

Drain the can of kidney beans and wash beans thoroughly, add to the mince. Continue cooking until beans are heated through, about 10 minutes. Serve with enchiladas, tacos or rice.

Minestrone

200 grams haricot beans
1 clove garlic, crushed
8 shallots, chopped
1/2 teaspoon basil, dried
3 tomatoes, chopped – canned or fresh
2 medium potatoes, chopped
1 cup macaroni shapes
Freshly ground pepper
2 teaspoons polyunsaturated oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
3 sticks celery, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
5 cups chicken stock
Broccoli, cauliflower or green beans (optional)

Soak the beans overnight in cold water. Drain and boil in fresh water until tender (approximately one hour). Drain and reserve. Saute garlic, onion, shallots, parsley and basil until slightly browned.

Add tomato paste and cook stirring for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, celery, carrots, potatoes and stock and bring to the boil. Simmer approximately 45 minutes. Add beans and macaroni. Add other ingredients and cook a further 15 minutes. Season to taste as desired. Serve sprinkled with additional chopped parsley.

Minestrone soup is a meal in itself if served with a side bowl of cottage cheese and crusty bread.

NB: This does not freeze well.

Bean and Tamarillo Savoury

– serves 4
1- 2 teaspoons oil
1 medium onion, diced
1- 2 medium stalks celery, sliced
1/2 - 1 teaspoon cumin
1/4 teaspoon each cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice
1/2 - 1 teaspoon each dried basil and oregano
Pinch salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons tomato paste or
1/4 - 1/2 cup canned/fresh
1/2 - 3/4 cup stock or water
2 cups cooked beans – haricot, lima, soy
1 large tamarillo, blanched and diced into chunks
1 cup fresh whole meal breadcrumbs and 1/2 - 1 cup grated tasty cheese- mixed together, optional.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Lightly grease a rectangular baking dish. Saute onion and celery in oil in a medium saucepan over moderate heat. Add spices, herbs, salt, pepper, tomatoes and stock.

Stir to combine. Add beans and tamarillo. Stir gently and cook over a gentle heat until vegetables are just cooked, 5-10 minutes. Place in a baking dish; top with breadcrumbs and cheese. Bake 10 -15 minutes until topping is lightly browned. Serve with whole meal bread/plainly cooked brown rice or pasta and with green vegetables/green salad.

NB: Can omit breadcrumbs and cheese and serve after cooking is finished in saucepan. Can omit tamarillo and use more tomatoes, and add 1/4 - 1/2 cup whole kernel corn.

Kidney Bean Loaf

– makes one loaf (20cm x 10cm)
2 cups cooked kidney beans, mashed
1/4 cup peanuts, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 slice of bread made into crumbs
Pepper to taste
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 eggs, beaten

Mix all ingredients well together in a bowl. Press into a greased loaf tin. Bake at 180°C for 1 hour. Slice and serve hot or cold.

Bean Casserole

– serves 4-6
2 teaspoons oil
1 onion, sliced
1 teaspoon curry powder
1 tablespoon flour
1 can tomatoes
2 cups cooked dried beans e.g. lima, haricot, kidney
2 carrots, grated or
2 stalks celery, diced

Heat oil in a large saucepan, add onion, curry powder and cook for one minute. Add flour and cook for a further one minute. Add tomatoes and beans. Add carrot or celery and cook until heated through. Serve immediately.

Vegetarian Shepherds Pie

– serves 4 - 6

Topping:

1 kg potatoes
2 tablespoons margarine
Milk

Filling:

2- 2 1/2 cups cooked kidney beans
2 large onions
2 tablespoons margarine
1/2 - 1 red or green pepper
3 tablespoons whole meal flour
1 teaspoon green herb stock
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon paprika
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 teaspoon dark soya sauce
1 1/2 cups bean cooking stock
2 tablespoons tomato concentrate

If starting with uncooked beans, pour boiling water over one cup of kidney beans and stand for one hour to soak. Drain, then simmer them in four cups of fresh, hot water for an hour or until very tender.

Leave to stand in the cooking liquid until beans are required, then drain, reserving 1 1/2 cups of cooking liquid. Peel potatoes, cook until tender in lightly salted water. Drain and mash with margarine and milk to get a good consistency.

In a large pot cook the chopped onions in the margarine until tender and medium brown. Stir in the chopped red and/or green pepper, then the flour. Stir over moderate heat until the flour has browned slightly, then add the next six seasoning ingredients. Stir in the bean cooking liquid and tomato concentrate and bring to the boil, stirring constantly. Add the drained beans, taste, adjust flavour as necessary.

Spread the mixture on the bottom of a lightly sprayed or greased pan about 20 x 25 cm. Cover it with spoonfuls of mashed potato so it covers all the bean mixture. Sprinkle with grated cheese.

Reheat in a moderate oven 180°C for 20 -30 minutes. Leave the pie to stand for a few minutes before serving.

Bean Salad

– serves 4

1 cup cooked mixed beans
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 can green beans, drained or 1 1/2 cup cooked fresh beans
1 medium carrot, finely chopped

Dressing:

1/4 cup hot water
1/4 cup salad oil
1/2 cup sugar
1 clove garlic, crushed
1/2 cup vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt

Combine the beans, chopped onion, green beans and carrot. Dissolve sugar in the hot water. Add oil, garlic, vinegar and salt. Marinate overnight in a covered dish in the refrigerator. Drain. Sprinkle with chopped parsley.

Family Chilli

– serves 8-10

2 1/2 - 3 cups pinto or kidney beans
Water
3 – 4 onions, peeled and chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed or chopped (optional)
2 tablespoons oil
500 grams mince beef
2 teaspoons salt
Pepper
2 teaspoons mild chilli powder
1 1/2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons vinegar
2 x 425 gram cans tomato puree

Place the beans in a bowl, cover with water and soak overnight. Drain, place in a saucepan, cover with a large amount of water and simmer for about 1 hour or until soft, but not mushy. Drain off most of any remaining water, leaving the beans well moistened.

Heat oil in a saucepan and cook the onions and garlic in it until soft. Remove. Add the mince to the saucepan and brown. Return onion to saucepan and add with salt, pepper, chilli, brown sugar and vinegar. Stir in the tomato puree and beans.

Cook gently for 5-10 minutes. Serve with rice.

NB: Add more chilli powder for a hotter taste.

Variation: Replace mince with small amounts of bacon or ham pieces and use just one can of tomato puree.

Sweet and Sour Lima Beans

– serves 5

3/4 cup (100 grams) lima beans
1/4 onion, diced
1/4 clove garlic, crushed
1/2 carrot, diced
1 tablespoon oil, optional
200 ml pineapple juice
1/4 cup pineapple pieces (or more)
1/2 green pepper, diced
1 stick celery, diced
2 tablespoons cornflour
1/4 cup vinegar
1-2 teaspoons soy sauce
1/2 teaspoon lemon rind, optional

Soak beans overnight, cook and drain. Saute onions, garlic and carrot in oil, drain. Heat 150ml of the pineapple juice to boiling point. Add sautéed vegetables, beans, pineapple, pepper and celery. Mix the cornflour to a smooth paste with remaining pineapple juice.

Take the pineapple juice/vegetable mixture off the heat, add the cornflour mixture slowly. Stir constantly. Add vinegar, soy sauce and lemon rind. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently. Serve with boiled rice.

NB: Can use other beans such as haricot, soy beans, and chickpeas.

Chickpea Recipes

Garbanzo (chickpea) Spread

– Yield, 3 cups

3 cups cooked chickpeas, drained
1/3 cup (80ml) chickpea liquid or water
1/4 - 1/2 cup sesame seeds, toasted
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
Pinch salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Put chickpeas and water into a blender. Blend till smooth. Add other ingredients and mix till combined – in blender or by hand or mash chickpeas and water till smooth, then mix in other ingredients. Can be used as dip for vegetables, spread for crackers, sandwiches, filling for pita bread, bread rolls.

Top with shredded lettuce or alfalfa sprouts, sliced cucumber and tomato.

Chickpea Curry

225 grams dried chickpeas
1,200 mls water
30 grams margarine
2 medium onions, chopped
1 clove garlic
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 green chives
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon paprika
300 ml stock
30 grams ginger root

Soak chickpeas in water overnight. Cook. Melt margarine in saucepan over low heat, stir in the onions, garlic and cumin seeds. Cook until onions are golden. Stir in prepared chillies and spices and cook for 1 minute. Mix in the cooked chickpeas and pour in the stock. Grate in the ginger root. Bring stock to the boil, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Serve with rice.

Chickpea and Frankfurter Medley

– serves 8 -10

1 1/2 cups chickpeas
1 1/2 cups lentils
4 1/2 cups water
3 onions, peeled and chopped
1 large leek or 2 stalks celery, sliced
3 tablespoons oil
4 – 6 frankfurters or other spicy sausage, sliced
2 teaspoons salt
Black pepper
1 x 425 gram tomato puree

Soak the chickpeas and lentils separately in plenty of water, overnight. Drain chickpeas and place in a saucepan with measured 4 1/2 cups of water and simmer for about 30 minutes, then add the drained lentils and continue cooking, with occasional stirring, until the lentils are mushy, chickpeas tender and water absorbed.

In another saucepan heat the oil, add vegetables and cook until the onion is slightly brown. Remove from pan. Add sliced frankfurters and cook for a few minutes in remaining oil. Add the vegetables, sausage, salt, pepper and puree into the lentil mixture and cook for 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently. Serve with rice or crisp toast.

Lentil Recipes

Lentil Patties

– serves 6

2 tablespoons oil
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 celery stick, chopped
1 carrot, peeled and chopped
225 grams brown lentils
450 ml water
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons wholemeal flour
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon curry powder
1 tablespoon mango chutney
Olive oil

Dressing:

150ml natural yoghurt
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the garlic, onion, celery and carrot and sauté until the vegetables begin to soften. Add the water, lentils, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat, cover and simmer for about an hour until the lentils are soft and all the liquid is absorbed. Add 2 tablespoons flour, the spices and chutney to the pan and mix well.

Continue to cook gently for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. Adjust the seasonings. If necessary turn the mixture onto a plate and leave until cool enough to handle.

Divide the mixture into 18 equal pieces and form each one into a patty about 1cm / 1/2 inch thick. Coat with the remaining flour. Heat a little oil in a frying pan and fry the lentil patties, a few at a time, until crisp and golden brown, turning once. Mix all dressing ingredients together.

Serve the patties on a bed of rice, topped with the yoghurt dressing.

Lentil Soup

– serves 3-4

150 grams split red lentils
600ml stock – vegetable, beef or chicken
1 onion diced
2 tomatoes, diced or 1/4 cup canned tomatoes
1 carrot, diced
1 stick celery, diced
Small piece of mint or parsley
Pinch of salt
1/4 cup milk, optional

Put lentils in a large pot with the stock, vegetables, mint or parsley. Simmer gently for 20-30 minutes until the lentils are cooked and soft. Add salt and pepper. Add milk and heat gently – do not allow to boil. Garnish with a sprinkle of paprika and serve with croutons.

Lentil and Vegetable Soup

– serves 6

150 grams red lentils
2 medium carrots
1 cup corn, fresh, frozen or tinned
1 medium onion
2 tablespoons soy sauce
4 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 teaspoon tumeric
4 bay leaves
2 litres water
Salt and pepper

Slice the onions and carrots into thin strips. Put all ingredients into a large saucepan. Cover and simmer slowly until vegetables are soft.

Remove lid and simmer a further 15 minutes. Season well.

Curried Lentils

– serves 4-6

1 1/2 cups lentils
2 cups water
1 or 2 bay leaves
1-2 tablespoons oil
2 onions chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 teaspoon ground tumeric } or 1-1 1/2 teaspoon
1 teaspoon ground coriander } curry powder
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 cup chopped carrot
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup chopped green pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup water

Put the lentils, water and bay leaves into a medium-sized saucepan. Cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the lentils are tender and the water has disappeared. As soon as you have put the lentils on to cook, start to prepare the second mixture.

Heat the oil or butter, then add the next six ingredients. Stir together, cover and cook over a moderate heat for 5 minutes. Stir at intervals. Then add chopped vegetables and stir for 2-3 minutes more. Add the salt and water, cover and cook for 5 minutes more, until the vegetables are just tender. Combine the lentil and vegetable mixtures and stir over a very low heat for about 5 minutes. Taste and add more salt and pepper, if desired.

Serve with boiled rice or with brown rice. If serving brown rice put it on to cook before starting to make the lentil mixture. Brown rice needs to cook for 30-35 minutes before it is tender.

Lentil Sandwich Spread

1 1/2 cups brown lentils
1 tablespoon margarine
1/2 tablespoon tomato paste
Pinch black pepper
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Cover lentils with water. Bring to the boil, simmer for approximately 30 minutes until soft. Drain well. Mash. Soften margarine and combine with other ingredients to make a paste. Mix mashed lentils. Cover with gladwrap and refrigerate until needed.

Lentil and Vegetable Soup

– serves 4 – 6

1 cup red lentils
1 litre hot water
25 grams margarine
1-2 onions
1-2 cloves garlic
1 -2 carrots
1 -2 stalks celery
1 teaspoon whole or ground cumin seeds
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander, optional
1/2 teaspoon garam marsala
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1 cup frozen peas
1 tin tomatoes in tomato juice
1/4 cup chopped fresh herbs – parsley, chives, spring onions, basil, oregano
1 tablespoon sugar, optional
1/2 - 1 teaspoon salt

Measure the lentils and hot tap water into a bowl so that the lentils start softening. Melt the margarine in a large saucepan. Add the chopped onions, garlic, carrots and celery. If you intend to puree the soup, you can leave the vegetables in large pieces. If you want the soup unpureed and fairly chunky, cut them into small pieces.

Add the cumin, coriander, garam marsala and paprika to the vegetables (leave out any of these which you do not have, or add 1-2 teaspoons curry powder, if you have none of them). Cook over a moderate heat, stirring occasionally for 2 -3 minutes longer, without letting the vegetables brown. Add the hot water and lentils, cover, and simmer for about 20 minutes or until the vegetables and lentils are tender.

Puree all, part or none of the mixture, bring back to the boil. Add the peas and the tomatoes, that have been chopped to the same size as the peas. Add the sugar, then salt to taste. Add the herbs.

Serve with hot toast or croutons, french bread or bread rolls and with a leafy green side salad or coleslaw.

Lentil and Spinach Loaf

– serves 6

1 1/2 cups brown lentils
1/2 cup low fat yoghurt
2 tablespoons wholemeal flour
2 rounded teaspoons whole seed mustard
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 egg and 1 egg white
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 tablespoons parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper
2 cups cooked spinach, well drained

Put lentils in a large pan. Cover with water and simmer until soft, approximately 20 minutes. Drain and place lentils in a bowl. Add yoghurt, flour, egg and egg white, mustard and ground ginger. Mix together and season.

Lightly oil a loaf tin. Starting with a lentil layer, put alternate layers of the lentils and spinach mixture finishing with a lentil layer. Bake at 200°C for approximately 40 minutes. Turn out of tin, sprinkle with parmesan cheese and serve.

Pumpkin and Lentil Pie

– serves 6

400 grams pumpkin, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons water
225 grams red lentils (1 1/4 cups)
600ml stock
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper
25 grams butter or margarine
1 medium onion, finely chopped
4 tablespoons chopped mixed herbs
2 tablespoons tomato puree

For short crust pastry:

3/4 cup wholemeal, self-raising flour
1/4 cup margarine
Salt
Cold water to mix

Make the pastry and set it aside to chill. Put the diced pumpkin into a saucepan with the water. Set it on a low heat for 20 minutes, beating it occasionally to reduce to a thick puree. Put the lentils into a saucepan with the stock, bay leaf and seasoning. Bring them to the boil and simmer them gently for only 30 minutes so you have a puree that is not too dry.

Pre-heat the oven to 190°C. Line a 20cm flan ring with the pastry. It will be very short so do not worry if you have to do a bit of patching up.

Melt the butter or margarine in a small frying pan on a low heat. Stir in the onion and cook until it is golden. Mix together the pumpkin, lentils, onion and any of the margarine or butter still in the pan. Beat in the herbs and tomato puree. Spoon the mixture into the pastry case and bake the pie for 40 minutes. Serve it hot.

NB: instead of pastry – use a low fat pastry or use a layer of rice as the base.

Lentil and Pineapple Salad

– serves 4

2 cups cooked brown lentils
1 large pineapple or 1/2 - 1 cup pineapple pieces
2 large tomatoes

Dressing:

1-2 tablespoons oil, optional
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1-2 teaspoons soy sauce
1/2 - 1 teaspoon curry powder
1 clove garlic, crushed

Cut pineapple in half lengthwise. Cut down between the flesh and skin and work around with the knife to gradually cut and scoop out the pineapple flesh. Cut pineapple flesh into small chunks. Put into a bowl.

Cut tomatoes into smallish chunks. Add tomatoes and lentils to the pineapple pieces in the bowl. Mix carefully together.

Dressing:

Combine oil, vinegar, soy sauce, curry powder and garlic in a bowl. Pour dressing over the lentils. Mix carefully together. Put lentil mixture back into pineapple shells to serve or put into a bowl. Serve with brown rice/wholemeal pasta and a green salad/green vegetables.