

# Unsung Heroes

It's time legumes got the attention they deserve.



Many pass on legumes because of their dry, powdery texture without realising that they're missing out on some really essential nutrients. Low in fat and rich in soluble fibre (maintains a healthy weight, lowers cholesterol, and prevents diabetes and heart disease) as well as potassium for a healthy ticker and muscles, the legume family includes peas, beans and lentils. They are also a protein source for vegetarians. Jaclyn Reutens, a clinical dietitian on Shape's advisory board, says 200g to 300g will offer you the same amount as a palm-sized portion of fish, chicken or meat.



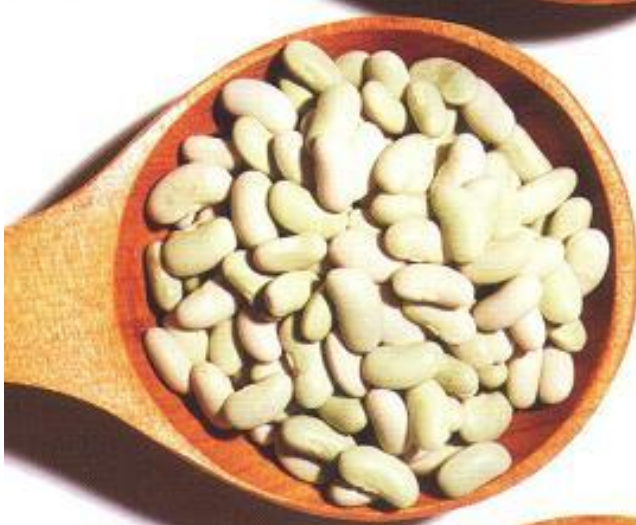
## 1/BLACK-EYED PEAS

Also known as cowpeas, they are the star ingredient in Hoppin' John, a traditional New Year's Day good luck dish in the American South. They're simmered with spicy sausages, ham hocks or fat pork, rice, and tomato sauce. Packing the least calories of the legumes here, they are a good source of zinc, an immunity-boosting micro mineral.

**OUR PICK** Gold Mine Organic Black Eyed Peas (\$11, Supernature)

**COOKING TIP** Make a healthier Hoppin' John by replacing ham hocks or pork with chicken.

**PER 100G** 90kcal, 3g protein, 0.35g fat (0.09g saturated), 5g dietary fibre, 431mg potassium



## 2/FLAGEOLET BEANS

Popular in French country cuisine, these pale green legumes are extremely low in fat (so that's how the mademoiselles keep trim!), and rich in vitamin K that helps prevent blood clots.

**OUR PICK** Bob's Red Mill Gourmet Flageolet Beans (\$6.10, Cold Storage)

**COOKING TIP** They are excellent for soups and salads (try them in a mixed berry salad with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar). Plus, their mild flavour is a perfect complement to roast leg of lamb.

**PER 100G** 330kcal, 22g protein, 1.1g fat (0g saturated), 24.2g fibre, 1,423mg potassium



## 3/BLACK TURTLE BEANS

According to a *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* study, these boast free radical-fighting flavonoids with 10 times as much anthocyanins than antioxidants in the same amount of regular oranges!

**OUR PICK** Waitrose Love Life Black Turtle Beans (\$5.50, Cold Storage)

**COOKING TIP** More filling than flavourful, the beans make soups satisfying. Try them in a veggie soup with herbs, carrots, onions and celery.

**PER 100G** 346kcal, 21.3g protein, 0.9g fat (0.2g saturated), 24.9g fibre, 1,500mg potassium





#### 4/CANNELLINI BEANS

Also known as white Italian kidney beans, they are rich with calcium and thiamin (vitamin B1) that is vital to the nervous and immune systems, and helps the body convert carbohydrates into energy.

**OUR PICK** *Probios Alimenti Legumi Fagioli Cannellini* (\$5.95, Supernature)

**COOKING TIP** These are popular in soups and salads. Try mixing the boiled beans with grapes and tuna for a satisfying salad.

**PER 100G** 333kcal, 23.6g protein, 0.83g fat (0.1g saturated), 24.9g fibre, 1,406mg potassium



#### 5/CHICKPEAS

In a study by the University of Tasmania in Australia, it was found that consuming chickpeas had a cholesterol-lowering effect in adults. These hearty beans also keep you satiated long after a meal, curbing any cravings for unhealthy snacks. The only drawback: They take a longer time to cook than most legumes.

**COOKING TIP** Sauté with spinach and bowtie pasta or macaroni in olive oil.

**OUR PICK** *Ceres Organics Chickpeas* (\$11.30, Four Seasons Organic Market)

**PER 100G** 365kcal, 19.3g protein, 6g fat (0.6g saturated), 17.4g fibre, 875mg potassium



#### 6/LENTILS

If you're always nodding off in the afternoon, try adding lentils to your lunch. High in fibre and filling, they keep your energy level revved up. They also help slow the body's absorption of sugar, so your blood glucose levels remain steady. There are red, green and brown varieties, and the red tend to taste sweeter than the others.

**OUR PICK** *Origins Healthfood Organic Red Lentil* (\$4.60, Cold Storage)

**COOKING TIP** Lentils cook quicker than beans, so don't stew them for too long or they'll turn to mush. Simmer with garlic, onions and a dusting of turmeric powder for a delicious side that pairs well with fish.

**PER 100G** 219kcal, 25g protein, 0g fat, 28.1g fibre, 578mg potassium



#### 7/SOYA BEANS

These are the only legumes to provide one with all nine essential amino acids – the crucial proteins that the body doesn't produce. Soya beans also score high in potassium – a quarter cup (47g) contains twice the amount in a large banana.

**OUR PICK** *Fairprice Pasar Dried Food Soya Beans* (\$1.35, Fairprice Finest)

**COOKING TIP** Add a handful of boiled soya beans to your veggie stir-fry.

**PER 100G** 446kcal, 36.5g protein, 20g fat (2.9g saturated), 9.3g fibre, 1,797mg potassium



**THE SECRET TO YUMMY LEGUMES IS...** A sprig of basil, a dash of salt, a garlic clove or two... Herbs and seasonings add more flavour to them. It's also important to soak legumes for at least eight to 12 hours before cooking. This helps to reduce phytic acid, a naturally-occurring substance that can interfere with your body's absorption of vital nutrients.

