



Chickpeas chock full of nutrition

What is the difference between garbanzo beans and chickpeas?

Ah, that's an easy one. There is no difference.

Chickpeas and garbanzo beans are the same thing. They're also called cece or ceci in Italy, kichererbse in Germany, and revithia in Greece. And they're as versatile as they are healthful.

The beige or cream-colored, round, irregularly shaped chickpeas are beans, similar to kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, black-eyed peas and split peas. In the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, you can count these legumes in either the vegetable or in the meat and beans group.

If you generally eat anywhere from 1,600 to 2,400 calories a day, the guidelines suggest consuming 2.5 to three cups of legumes each week. At those calorie levels, a person should eat a total of two to three cups of vegetables a day and between five to 6.5 ounces of meat or beans a day. (A half-cup of chickpeas weighs just over four ounces.)

Chickpeas are healthful, with a half-cup offering 140 calories, six grams of protein, five grams of fiber, 1.6 grams of iron, 200 milligrams of potassium, and just over one gram of fat. They're also a very good source of manganese, and offer good amounts of vitamin B6 and folate.

However, canned chickpeas

also can be full of sodium, with 360 milligrams per half-cup. If you can't find low-sodium varieties, you can rinse them before consuming to reduce the sodium content. Or, you can buy them as dry beans and soak them yourself without salt.

Many Americans first encountered chickpeas when salad bars began becoming a restaurant institution. They'd add a spoonful of these garbanzo beans on top of their salad much like they would croutons. But chickpeas are also a common ingredient in soups, such as minestrone, and stews. And they're the main ingredient in hummus, a Middle Eastern spread made from mashed chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic, and olive or sesame oil, usually served with pita bread.

Dried chickpeas can be ground into besan, a high-protein flour (also called gram flour) commonly used in East Indian dishes. It's higher in protein, fat and fiber than all-purpose white flour, but lower in calories and carbohydrates.

The name "chickpea" derives from the Latin *cicer* (the chickpea plant is called *Cicer arietinum*). Garbanzo, the name more commonly used in Spanish-speaking countries, is thought to come from the Greek.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



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