

What's not to love about legumes?

What's to love about legumes? Plenty. Kidney beans, black-eyed peas, soybeans, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, pinto beans, limas, split peas and all other members of the legume family are low in fat and sodium and provide lots of protein, fiber, iron, potassium and magnesium.

A half-cup serving of cooked legumes contains as much as eight grams of fiber. About 75 percent of this is insoluble fiber, the kind believed to decrease the risk of colon cancer and other intestinal maladies. The remaining 25 percent is soluble fiber, which helps lower blood cholesterol. Among the B vitamins found in legumes is folate, a form of folic acid, which is linked to a reduced incidence of heart disease and birth defects.

Legumes are a nutritional bargain as well, providing eight grams of protein per serving at a much lower cost than meat. Although soybeans are the only legumes that provide all eight essential amino acids, you can easily add the missing ones by eating cereal grains like rice, pasta, or corn at other times during the day.

What's not to love about legumes? Well, there's that embarrassing gas, caused by

CHICK PEA AND VEGETABLE RAGOUT		(garnish, optional)
1 1/2 cups diced (1/2-inch) onion		Combine the onion, carrots, celery and olive oil in a 10-inch nonstick skillet that has a tight-fitting lid. Cook, stirring occasionally, over medium heat for 10 minutes; do not brown. Stir in curry and cumin; cook, stirring, 1 minute.
2 carrots, sliced (1/2-inch diagonals), about 1 cup		Add the chick peas, tomatoes, sweet potato, green beans and raisins. Cook, covered, for 10 minutes. Add 2 or 3 tablespoons water as needed to keep the mixture moist. Stir in the zucchini; cover and cook until all the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes longer. Add salt and pepper to taste.
1 rib celery, sliced (1/2-inch), about 1 cup		Remove from heat; let stand uncovered. In a medium bowl, stir the yogurt until smooth. Add a spoonful of the hot vegetable mixture and stir to blend. Transfer to the skillet and stir to blend. Sprinkle with peanuts before serving, if desired.
1 garlic clove, chopped		
1 tablespoon olive oil		
1 teaspoon curry powder		
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin		
1 can (19 ounces) chick peas, rinsed and drained		
1 can (15 ounces) cut up tomatoes with juices		
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes		
1 cup frozen cut green beans		
1/4 cup raisins		
2 small zucchini, quartered lengthwise and cut into 1/2-inch pieces		
Salt and freshly ground black pepper		
1 cup plain nonfat yogurt, at room temperature		
2 tablespoons chopped, dry roasted peanuts		



Hearty dish: Chick Pea and Vegetable Ragout, a hearty, stew-like mixture of vegetables, makes a delicious meal.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

compounds found naturally in beans that our bodies can't digest. Although you can't eliminate the problem completely, you can make it better by soaking, draining and rinsing dried beans before cooking, or by draining the liquid off and rinsing canned beans (this also removes excess sodium found in most canned

beans). Then be sure to drink adequate fluids and build up tolerance by increasing the amount of beans in your diet slowly. Another perceived drawback to eating legumes is preparation time, but this can be overcome in several ways. Canned beans are an option if you don't have time to spare. Or you can try the

quick-soak method in place of the traditional overnight soaking for dried beans. The quick-soak method involves boiling the beans in water for two minutes, then removing the pot from the heat and letting it sit for two to four hours with the cover on. Then drain, rinse and cover with fresh

cold water and cook for one to four hours, depending on the type of legume. Essentially neutral in flavor, legumes complement a variety of cooking styles and ingredients. They are found both at the center of the plate or in supporting roles and are essential to many ethnic recipes. This hearty, stew-

like mixture of vegetables makes a delicious meal. Substitute, subtract or add whatever vegetables you have on hand. Information compliments of the American Institute for Cancer Research. Visit them online at www.aicr.org

WHAT'S COOKING

Send items for consideration in What's Cooking to Kelly Wagonik, Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. To fax, (734) 591-7279 or e-mail kwagonik@homecomm.net

ULTIMATE CHICKEN SOUP CONTEST
Temple Kol Ami will host its Second Annual Ultimate Chicken Soup Contest at noon Friday,

Feb. 25 in the Temple social hall. Contestants must send or fax their recipes with an entry form and may include a brief explanation of the soup's origin, if possible to the temple by 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 28. All mailed entries must be postmarked Jan. 28. A panel of judges will select the top 10 finalists who will be notified by Friday, Feb. 11. Entry forms are available at Temple Kol Ami, 5086 Walnut

Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Call the Temple (248) 861-0040 to have an entry form mailed or faxed to you. The winning recipe will be served at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit. First prize is a feature segment on "Keith Famic's Adventures in Cooking" on WDIV-TV, Channel 4, and a deluxe soup pot from Kitchen Glamour. Second prize is dinner for two at Restaurant Di Modesta in

Southfield and third prize is a cookbook from Kitchen Glamour. **CHOCOLATE CANDYMAKING**
Learn how to make delicious chocolates, create delectable assortments such as dips, molds and creams, and experiment with a variety of flavors. 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 24 at Berkshire Middle School, Room 108. The cost is \$16. Call Birmingham Community Education to

register (248) 203-3800 or check out www.communityed.net. **AT SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE**
Schoolcraft College in Livonia will be offering a variety of culinary arts classes this winter including, Winter Soups & Stews, 6-10 p.m. Monday, Jan 31; All Things Chocolate, 5-9 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 1, 8 & 15; European Bread Making, 5-10 p.m. Monday, Feb. 14 & 21. This

Cuisine at Home, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Monday, March 13 & 20; Pasta Cookery, 6-9 p.m. Thursday, March 16 & 23; Quick Easy Meals, 6-10 p.m. Monday, April 3; Outdoor Grilling and Entertaining, 5-10 p.m. Monday, April 17 & 24; and Buffet and Hors D'oeuvres-Hands On!, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Thursday & Friday, April 20 & 21. To register, or for more information, call, (734) 462-4448.

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