

Hearty Lentil-Oat “Bites”

These vegetarian lentil-oat “bites” are blended with Italian spices and baked to perfection. Serve with whole grain pasta and drizzle with a red pasta sauce for a hearty, flavorful meal.

CACFP Crediting Information:

Beans, peas, and lentils as a Meat/Meat Alternate:
2 bites provide 2 oz eq meat/meat alternate, 1/4 cup vegetable.

Beans, peas, and lentils as Vegetables:
2 bites provide 3/4 cup vegetable.



Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 65 minutes

Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients

1 cup (8 oz) lentils, brown, dry
 2 cups water
 1 bay leaf
 1 Tbsp olive oil
 1 Tbsp onion, dried
 1 Tbsp garlic, fresh, minced
 2 Tbsp flax seed meal, soaked with 3 oz water
 1 cup oats, rolled, quick, dry
 2 tsp oregano, divided in half
 2 tsp basil, dried, divided in half
 2 tsp thyme, dried, divided in half
 1 Tbsp tomato paste, canned, low-sodium
 2 tsp smoked paprika, divided
 2 tsp cumin, ground
 Pan-release spray
 2 cups (16 oz) crushed tomatoes, canned, undrained, no salt added
 8 oz low-sodium vegetable broth
 1 tsp sugar
 3/4 tsp salt
 1/4 tsp black pepper

Directions

- 1 Preheat oven to:
Conventional oven: 375 °F.
Convection oven: 350 °F.
- 2 Place the lentils, 2 cups of water, and bay leaf in a medium pot and bring to a boil.
Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium-low and let the lentils cook about 20 minutes (or until tender) and water has evaporated. Remove from heat, remove bay leaf, drain, and refrigerate until chilled. Save for step 4.
Critical Control Point:
Cool to 41°F or below.
- 3 In a small skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium-low heat. Add dried onions and garlic and cook until softened, about 3 minutes or until light golden brown.
- 4 Combine flax seed meal and water, soak for 5 minutes.
- 5 In a large mixing bowl, combine cooled lentils, garlic mixture, soaked flax seed meal, rolled oats, 1 tsp oregano, 1 tsp basil, 1 tsp thyme, tomato paste, 1 tsp smoked paprika and cumin.
- 6 Massage by hand until all ingredients are fully incorporated, or pulse in a food processor until moderately smooth, about 30% of the lentils should appear intact.
- 7 Using a 2 oz scooper, scoop mixture and place on a small baking pan (9 1/2" x 13") lined with parchment paper sprayed with a pan release spray. Place lentil balls in a hot oven and bake until browned and slightly firm for 25 minutes.
Critical Control Point:
Heat to 135 °F or higher.
Hold for hot service at 135 °F or higher.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

For 2 bites and 1/2 cup sauce

NUTRIENTS	AMOUNT
Calories	274
Total Fat	5 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	470 mg
Total Carbohydrate	46 g
Dietary Fiber	7 g
Total Sugars	5 g
Added Sugars	1 g
Protein	14 g
Vitamin A	0 RAE
Vitamin C	4 mg
Calcium	64 mg
Iron	5 mg

Directions continued...

- 7 In a small saucepan, combine crushed tomatoes, vegetable broth, remaining oregano, basil, thyme, smoked paprika, sugar, salt, and pepper. Stir well. Bring sauce to a boil for 1 minute over medium-high heat, reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes.
Critical Control Point:
 Heat to 135 °F or higher.
 Hold for hot service at 135 °F or higher.
- 8 Serve 2 “bites”. Top the bites with sauce using a 4 oz spoodle. Serve hot.

NOTES

The food safety temperatures are based on Federal consumer food safety guidance. Some information may be different in your state. Always check with your local regulatory authority (health department) or sponsoring organization (sponsor) for guidance on current food safety requirements in your operation.

Source:

USDA Standardized Recipe Project — 2025