

# RECIPE for health

MARCH 2011

In partnership with Health4U and Culinary Services

Featured Food:

## CHICKPEAS



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Chickpeas are quite the international little bean. Named “garbanzo” in Spain and Latin America, “ceci” in Italy, “grão-de-bico” in Portugal, “Bengal gram” in India, “hummus” in Middle Eastern countries and “shimbra” in Ethiopia, chickpeas are a pantry staple the world over.

I found a range of advice on preparing chickpea dishes (using canned versus dried, soaking versus not), so I went into my laboratory (kitchen) to do some experimentation. Here is a summary of my findings:

- One can of chickpeas (\$1.09), drained and rinsed, yielded 1 ½ cups of chickpeas. The texture was firm and a bit grainy, and the taste was salty with a metallic aftertaste, especially prominent in some brands.
- One pound of dried chickpeas (\$1.50), brined (three tablespoons salt to one gallon water) for eight hours, drained and rinsed then simmered for one hour and 15 minutes, yielded 6 ½ cups of chickpeas. Using a pressure cooker reduced the cook time to 15 minutes. The chickpeas held their shape, the texture was creamy smooth and the flavor was nutty.
- Eaten plain, the flavor of canned chickpeas could not hold a candle to chickpeas cooked from scratch.
- Canned chickpeas were acceptable when whirred in the food processor with lemon juice, minced garlic, tahini, olive oil and other spices to make hummus. The strong flavors in the soup recipe also covered for the canned chickpeas.
- Dried chickpeas that were brined and rinsed more than doubled in volume. They were ready to use in falafel (chickpea fritters) and soup recipes and for roasting (I tossed them with olive oil, salt and spices before popping them in the oven).
- The cooked chickpeas froze well.

If you love the convenience of canned chickpeas, consider a follow-up study. Gather together the various brands of canned chickpeas available where you shop and conduct a taste test of your own. Be prepared to make several batches of hummus!

## Spicy Moroccan Chickpea Soup

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 6–8.

- ¼ c. Olive Oil
- 1½ c. medium-diced White Onion
- 1 c. medium-diced Celery
- 1 c. medium-diced Carrots
- 1 c. medium-diced Red Pepper
- 2 T. minced Garlic
- 1 t. Cinnamon
- 2 t. Turmeric
- 4 t. Cumin
- 1 t. Chili Powder
- 2 t. Paprika
- ½ t. Cayenne Pepper
- 1 qt. Vegetable or Chicken Stock
- 1 14-oz. can Diced Tomatoes
- 1 12-oz. package frozen Winter Squash
- 1 t. Sugar
- 2 cans Chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
- 1 pinch of Saffron Threads (optional)
- 5 oz. Baby Spinach
- Salt and Pepper, to taste
- ¼ c. chopped Cilantro (used for garnish)

Pour olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat; when warm, add onions, celery, carrots and peppers and sauté for five minutes. Add garlic, cinnamon, turmeric, cumin, chili powder, paprika and cayenne to the pot and sauté for an additional two minutes. Add vegetable or chicken stock, diced tomatoes, squash, sugar and chickpeas and let simmer on medium-low heat for 20–25 minutes. Add saffron if using.

Use a potato masher or an immersion blender to mash/blend some of the chickpeas and vegetables to thicken the soup. Add the spinach and let cook for only about five minutes. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with chopped cilantro.

Spicy Moroccan Chickpea Soup will be served for lunch at Brody Square, Hubbard, Landon, Shaw, The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips and Wonders on March 24. Visit [www.eatatstate.com](http://www.eatatstate.com) for dining hall hours and menus.

**S** Culinary Services  
MSU Residential and Hospitality Services

[www.health4u.msu.edu](http://www.health4u.msu.edu)

