



# Kids' Club Taste Testing Guide



Join the  
Birmingham  
Food  
Revolution



# Get Ready for the Full of Beans Mission!

## Materials

### For Activity 1 – Sensory Exploration

- Cans/cartons of beans e.g. kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas and green lentils
- Sieve
- Bowls/cups/plates and spoons
- Water to drink
- Pen and paper for children to rate the beans and pulses

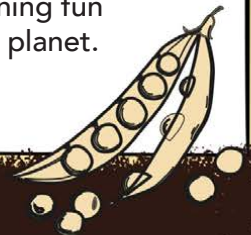
### For Activity 2 – Tasting Challenge

- Cans/cartons of beans e.g. kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas and green lentils
- Sieve
- Other foods of your choice
- Bowls/cups/plates and spoons
- Cardboard box/screen/cloth to hide food, or a blindfold
- Water to drink

We're on a mission to help everyone discover how amazing beans and pulses are. They may be small, but they are MIGHTY! They are super for our bodies, great for the planet, affordable, convenient, and delicious too!

We have created many Full of Beans activities and resources to help people discover, explore and celebrate beans and pulses through growing, tasting and cooking.

The Kids' Club Taste Testing Guide is packed full of fun activities you can do with children and young people in after school clubs, holiday clubs and youth groups. It gives children and young people the chance to taste and explore beans, as well as learning fun facts about why they are good for our bodies and the planet.



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# Chapter 1

## Get Set!

### INTRODUCTION TO LEGUMES

20  
mins

#### How to introduce the Full of Beans mission

"We're on a mission to superpower our city and make us all Full of Beans! First, we're on a discovery mission. Who knows what legumes are?"

*(give children the opportunity to answer)*

I don't know many adults that know what legumes are! Legumes are plants that grow pods. Inside those pods are seeds. Does anyone know what types of seeds grow in the pods?"

*(give children the opportunity to answer)*

There are four main types: beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas. Now, for a tricky question. Does anyone know what a pulse is? Not the heartbeat pulse ...there's another type of pulse.

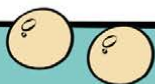
*(give children the opportunity to answer)*

They come from pods that have been left on the plant to dry, and the seed dries. This dried seed is called a pulse. I bet there's a type of pulse that you all know.

*(give children the opportunity to answer)*

Do you need a hint? Can anyone think of a type of pulse that's often served at school?"

*(give children the opportunity to answer)*



Baked beans! Sometimes the sauce can have too much salt or sugar, but the bean itself is brilliant. Does anyone know the names of any pulses?

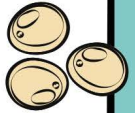
*(give children the opportunity to answer)*

There are so many! As well as chickpeas, there are green peas, yellow peas, black-eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, haricot beans, pinto beans, cannellini beans, butter beans, green lentils, brown lentils, red lentils, and many more! They come in all sorts of different colours and shapes. The legumes fact sheet shows what these different pulses look like.

Does anyone have some beans and pulses at home? Dried, in cans or cartons?

*(give children the opportunity to answer)*

You can buy them dry and cook them at home. Dry pulses can be stored for years! Or you can buy them ready cooked in cans, cartons or jars. There are so many types of beans and pulses and they are awesome. During the Full of Beans mission we're going to discover more about them. We'll be doing lots of fun activities such as exploring beans and pulses with our taste buds!"



**FOOD TRAILS**

## what are Legumes?

Legumes are plants that grows pods.

Inside the pods are seeds. We can eat some pods and their seeds fresh, such as peas and green beans.

You can leave the pods to dry on the plant, and then harvest them.

Inside the pods are dried seeds. These dry seeds are called pulses.

**Jack**  
My friend Jack claims that he can communicate with legumes.  
(Jack and the beans talk!)

There are different types of pulses including...

- beans
- chickpeas
- lentils
- peas

How many legumes have you tried?

**Full of BEANS**

**BIRMINGHAM**  
FOOD INITIATIVE

**Fuller**  
MILLER  
BIRMINGHAM

**Birmingham**  
City Council

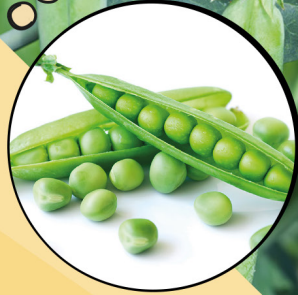




# what are Legumes?

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Inside the pods are seeds. We can eat some pods and their seeds fresh, such as peas and green beans.



You can leave the pods to dry on the plant, and then harvest them.

Inside the pods are dried seeds. These dry seeds are called pulses.



## Joke

My friend Jack claims that he can communicate with legumes  
Jack and the beans talk!

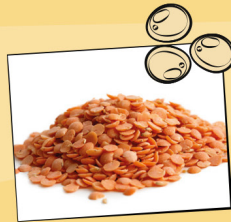
## There are different types of pulses including...



beans



chickpeas



lentils



peas

## How many legumes have you tried?



# Super Beans, Mighty Pulses

## Fuel your body with the power of beans!

Beans and pulses have lots of protein, fibre, complex carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals and are low in fat, salt and sugar.

**This means they help us:**



Build strong teeth and bones



Build strong muscles

Grow tall



Help us feel fuller for longer



Get better when we hurt ourselves



Help our tummies digest food



Grow long hair



Keep our hearts strong and blood pumping

Play all day long



Run fast





# Benefits of pulses for the planet



## Bean-tastic Soil

When legumes grow they help make soil healthy and full of nutrients. Eating beans and pulses makes our soil better!



## Climate Heroes

Legumes releases fewer gases that make the planet too warm. Eating beans and pulses helps stop climate change!



## Water Savers

Legumes need much less water to grow than meat and dairy products. Eating beans and pulses saves water!

## Joke

Why did the leaf go to the doctor?

It was feeling green!



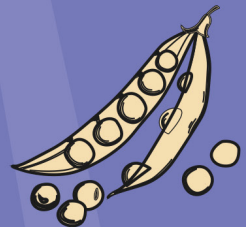
## Farming Friends

Legumes are important for gentle farming methods that use multiple crops. Eating beans and pulses supports better farming methods and nature!



## Habitat Protectors

Less land is needed to grow legumes than to raise animals which means there is more land for nature. Eating beans and pulses protects natural habitats!



## Chapter 2

# 18 top tips for taste testing activities

1.

### **Make it a group activity**

Taste testing in group settings, such as at school or at kids' clubs, is a fantastic way to expose children to a variety of different flavours, textures and food combinations.

It's a safe environment where you can offer small, non-threatening portions of food in a way that's fun, interactive, and creates a positive and playful environment with friends.

This is really key in helping children and young people to develop a healthy relationship with food.



2.

### **Praise "giving things a go"**

Rather than praising a child for trying a particular food, praise the trait of being adventurous and "giving things a go". This means they are more likely to take on that trait as part of their identity and "give things a go" in other situations.

3.

### **Don't force children to try food**

Children should not feel forced to try any foods – the motivation to try them needs to come from within the child for it to have a positive effect long term. If they feel forced to try them, they will develop a negative association with the food.

4.

**The word “like” doesn’t always mean what we think it does**

Adults often interpret children saying “like” or “not like” as permanent opinions, but children’s tastes and preferences change over time. Younger children also say they “don’t like” something because they haven’t developed the language yet to communicate what they mean, and sometimes they are trying to say, “I don’t want it right now”, “I feel nervous so I don’t like that feeling” or “I’m full”. Support children with exploring what they think about foods.



5.

**You have to try it to know if you like it**

Remind children they can’t know if they don’t like something if they’ve never tried it. It might be their new favourite food!

6.

**Move towards “Not sure about it...yet”**

Avoid language such as “not liking” a food, and instead say “not sure about it yet”. This changes the focus from a simple “like/dislike” opinion about the food, and towards a sliding scale where they could try it again in the future and discover they like it more.

7.

**Small portion sizes**

Keep the portion sizes small, to avoid overwhelming the child. This can be as little as one bean, or a tiny piece of broccoli.

8.

**Provide alternatives for allergies**

Consider dietary restrictions and allergies and provide alternatives so they can still participate in the activity.



9.

### **Break down food categories**

Children often categorise food under general labels, for example, "I don't like vegetables". It's important to give them opportunities to break down this label, and realise that they do like raw carrots, for example, so they do like some vegetables. Once they realise that they do like some foods from that category, it makes it easier to introduce more foods.

Also, you can break down the label of a particular food and suggest that they might like it more when prepared or cooked in a different way. Your taste buds aren't sure about it when it's roasted, but maybe they'll love it when it's stir fried? Give that a go next time! This means they are more likely to give that food a go in different contexts as they might discover they like it.

10.

### **Don't focus on negatives**

If a child doesn't want to try a food, don't focus on it, and instead say, "That's no problem – I know you're adventurous so I bet you can do it next time!" and move on to praise someone who is doing well.



11.

### **Reward progress**

Praise children for making individual progress rather than focusing on all children achieving the same thing. Children will have different responses to taste testing due to previous exposure, or lack of, to the food. A child who tries a food that they've never tried before has made huge progress.

12.

### **Train your taste buds to like food**

Remind children that scientists say that it can take 10-15 tries to develop a liking for a food, and sometimes when we first try a food our brain doesn't know what to think. We need to train our taste buds to like a food!



13.

**Praise individual milestones**

If a child has never tried a food before, then them touching and exploring the food with their hands, or touching it with their tongue, should be celebrated. Tailor praise to the child and their individual progress even if it's a small step.



14.

**Provide water to drink**

Provide water for children to cleanse their palate.

15.

**Praise role models**

Praise those who are doing well, especially those who are role models to other children and young people. Those who are nervous about trying the food often respond more to what a role model does than an adult encouraging them to try the food.

16.

**Discuss experiences as a group**

Encourage the children and young people to discuss what they have tried and share their thoughts with the group. This is a good opportunity to highlight positive experiences and for children to share how they have overcome challenges.

17.

**Have engaging discussions**

Encourage engaging discussions whilst trying food, for example by sharing interesting facts about the foods being tasted.

18.

**Don't make nervous children the focus of attention**

Give plenty of opportunities for a child to try a food without them being the focus of attention. They will often give it a try when no one is looking if they can see others enjoying the food and getting praised and rewarded.



## Chapter 3

# Taste Testing Activities

### GET READY FOR TASTE TESTING

“Scientists say it can take trying a food 10-15 times to develop a liking for it. Sometimes when we try a new food, we don’t know what to think about the taste and texture. Our brains say, “what’s this?!” However, the more we try it, the more familiar it becomes, and the more we start to like it. We just need to train our taste buds to start liking it! Today, we’re going to explore some beans and pulses.”

### Get your beans and pulses ready!

- 1 Wash your hands before handling food.
- 2 Open the can or carton (cans and scissors are sharp so ensure there’s adult supervision).
- 3 Pour the beans or pulses from the can or carton into a sieve over a sink.
- 4 Rinse them under a running tap until the water runs clear.
- 5 Turn the tap off and allow the last of the water to drain from the sieve.
- 6 They’re ready to eat! They are already cooked and you don’t need to heat them.



## ACTIVITY 1 – SENSORY EXPLORATION

### Materials

- Cans/cartons of beans e.g. kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas and green lentils
- Sieve
- Bowls/cups/plates and spoons
- Water to drink
- Pen and paper for children to rate the beans and pulses

### Instructions

1. Wash your hands.
2. Drain and rinse your beans and pulses. Create a tasting station with bowls/cups of kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas and green lentils. Label each bowl/cup to help the children identify them. Put a spoon in each bowl/cup and provide plates or bowls for each child. Remember to consider any dietary restrictions or allergies the children may have and provide alternative foods to try where necessary.
3. Look at the '18 top tips for tasting activities' on pages 10-13.
4. The children and young people can do the activity in teams. Explain that they're going to use their senses to explore the beans and pulses and discover the different tastes and textures. Everyone should wash their hands.
5. Ask the children and young people if they know what the five senses are? (Give them the opportunity to answer.) Sight, smell, feel, taste, hear.
6. Ask the children which part of the body they use for each sense. (Give them the opportunity to answer.) For sight we use our eyes, to smell we use our noses, to feel we use our skin (especially our fingers as they are more sensitive), to taste we use our tongues (and our sense of smell can have an effect on taste, too!), and to hear we use our ears.



7. Put a very small amount of each food on each child's plate and bowl. Encourage them to consider the senses as they explore the food.

**Sight:** What do you see?

(e.g., colour, red, green, brown, white, shape, round, spherical, curved, long, flat, size, small, texture, shiny, smooth, what it looks similar to)

**Smell:** What can you smell?

(e.g., mild, strong, no smell, salty, metallic, musty, flowery, fruity)

**Feel:** What is the texture?

(e.g., hard, soft, smooth, crunchy, gritty, juicy, lumpy, powdery, squishy, wet, slippery)

**Taste:** What is the flavour?

(e.g., sweet, salty, mild, strong, fresh, sour, refreshing)

**Hear:** What can you hear?

(e.g., silent, loud, quiet, wet, crunchy)

8. Encourage the teams to discuss the beans and pulses and ask questions such as, 'did it taste like anything you've eaten before?' or 'how did it feel in your mouth?'
9. Remind children that you can train your taste buds to like a food, and it can take 10-15 tries before it happens.
10. Provide each child with something to write on and ask them to rate each bean and pulse based on their experience and write down their comments.





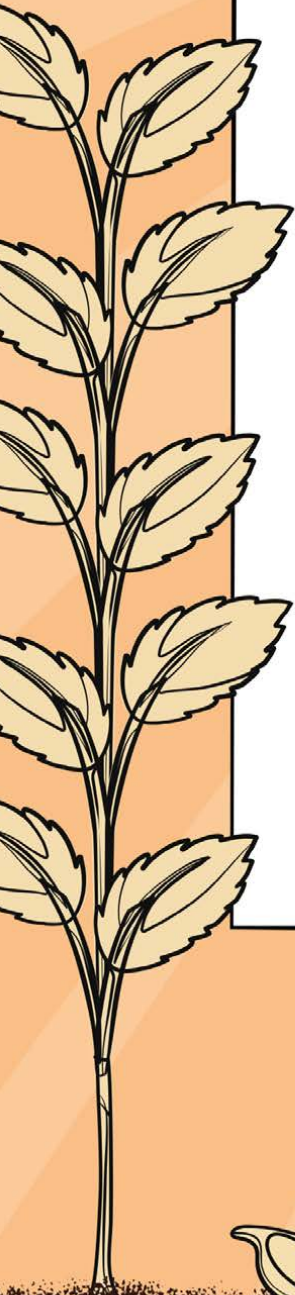
## ACTIVITY 2 – TASTING CHALLENGE

### Materials

- Cans/cartons of beans e.g. kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas and green lentils
- Sieve
- Other foods of your choice
- Bowls/cups/plates and spoons
- Cardboard box/screen/cloth to hide food, or a blindfold
- Water to drink

### Instructions

1. Wash your hands.
2. Drain and rinse your beans and pulses. Prepare bowls/cups/plates of different foods including kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas and green lentils. Also have other foods available to try such as vegetables, fruit, sauces or herbs. Remember to consider any dietary restrictions or allergies the children may have and provide alternative foods to try where necessary.
3. Put each of the bowls/cups/plates of food out of sight but so children can reach their hands in and touch them (e.g., cardboard box, behind a screen or cloth). Have a different tasting station for each food, and label them with a number. If you are unable to use a cardboard box, screen or cloth, then move the food out of sight of the group and blindfold the children instead.
4. Look at the '18 top tips for tasting activities' on pages 10-13.
5. The children and young people can do the activity in teams. Explain that they're going to be exploring different food without seeing them (explain whether the food is out of sight or if they will be blindfolded). Everyone should wash their hands before starting the activity.



6. Guide the children to each tasting station and get them to use a spoon to taste a little bit of each food. Ask them to describe the flavours, textures and any other observations.
7. Provide each team something to write on and ask them to guess what they think the food at each tasting station is.
8. One tactic is for all the team members to try all the foods, which will mean they have a better chance at guessing the food correctly.
9. Another tactic would be for the team members to each try food from different tasting stations, so each team member only tries some of the foods. If someone tries a food and they are unsure what it is, then another team member could try it to see if they could identify it.
10. Each team can get a point for every type of bean or pulse they tried. Even if they just had a little nibble!
11. They can also get a bonus point if they guessed the food correctly.







# Chapter 4

## Learn more about beans and pulses

### types of pulses

# Beans

Beans grow in long pods



The pods dry out on the plant. They are harvested after the pods, and the beans inside, are dry.



**Joke**

**Why can't you trust a legume with a secret?**

They always spill the beans!



Beans come in lots of different colours, shapes and sizes.

Inside the pods are beans.



Beans can be bought ready cooked in cans, cartons and jars. They can be eaten cold or heated up.



They can also be bought dried. Larger beans need to be soaked in water for at least 4 hours to rehydrate. Then they need to be boiled for 10 minutes, then simmered for around 1 to 2 hours.



Beans can be added to sauces, stews, soups, curries and salads. They can also be blitzed into a dip.



types of pulses

# Chickpeas

Chickpeas grow  
in small pods



The pods dry on  
the plant.



Once the pods, and  
the seeds inside, have  
dried they are harvested.  
The dried chickpeas are  
removed from the shell.



Chickpeas can be bought  
ready cooked in cans, cartons,  
sachets and jars. They can be  
eaten cold or heated up.



They can also be bought dried. They need  
to be soaked in water for at least 8 hours  
to rehydrate. Then they need to be boiled  
for 5 minutes, then simmered for around  
1.5 to 3 hours.



Joke

What did one  
chickpea say to the  
other?

Hummus a tune!



Chickpeas can be added  
to sauces, stews, soups,  
curries and salads. They can  
also be roasted whole and  
blitzed into a dip.

## types of pulses

# Peas

Peas grow in medium sized pods.



**Joke**

I lost one pea from my plate at dinner the other day  
It was an escape-pea!



They can be harvested fresh and eaten. They can be frozen to make them last longer.

The pods can be left to dry on the plant.



Once they are dry they are harvested, and the dry peas removed from the shell. The dry peas are a type of pulse.



The outer skin can be removed and the inside splits into two. These are called split peas. They cook more quickly and get soft when cooked.



They can also be bought dried. They need to be cooked for around 30-45 minutes.



Dried peas can be whole. You can get yellow peas and green peas. They hold their shape when cooked.



Yellow peas



Green peas



**Peas can be added to sauces, stews, soups, curries and salads.**





types of pulses

# Lentils

Lentils grow in small pods.



**Joke**

How do you address an audience full of pulses?  
Ladies and lentil-men...



Once the pods have dried on the plant they are harvested. The dry seeds are removed from the shells. There are lots of different lentil varieties that are different colours including red, brown and green.

Lentils can be bought ready cooked in cans, cartons, sachets, jars and frozen. They can be eaten cold or heated up.

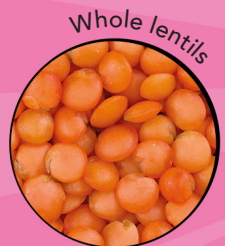


They can also be bought dried. They need to be cooked for around 30-45 minutes.

Lentils can be added to sauces, stews, soups, curries and salads.



Lentils can be whole or the skin removed and the inside split in two. Whole lentils hold their shape when cooked whereas split lentils cook more quickly.



Whole lentils



Split lentils

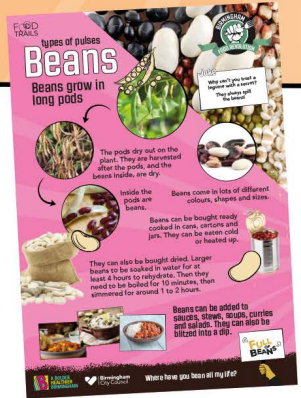


# Activity - discussion ideas

## Kidney beans

### Look at the beans fact sheet

"Kidney beans are named after their kidney shape and come in various colours, such as red, white and speckled. These beans are packed with lots of good stuff that our bodies need to grow and stay healthy. You can do all sorts of fun things with kidney beans, like turning them into tasty soups, stews or salads. Has anyone here tried kidney beans before? How do you normally eat them and in what dishes?"



### Kidney bean quiz:

#### 1. What colours can kidney beans come in?

- a. Green and purple
- b. Yellow and blue
- c. Pink and orange
- d. Red, white and speckled

Answer: d. red, white and speckled

#### 2. Kidney beans are a great source of fibre. What does fibre help with?

- a. Keeping our tummies happy.
- b. Helps us see in the dark.
- c. Helps us grow taller.
- d. Helps us run faster.

Answer: a. keeping our tummies happy.

#### 3. Kidney beans are often used in which types of dishes?

- a. Pizzas
- b. Cakes and cookies
- c. Soups and stews
- d. Ice cream and puddings

Answer: c. soups and stews

#### 4. What do you have to do before eating dry kidney beans?

- a. Peel off the skin
- b. Soak and then cook them
- c. Cut them up
- d. Blend them

Answer: b. soaking and cooking

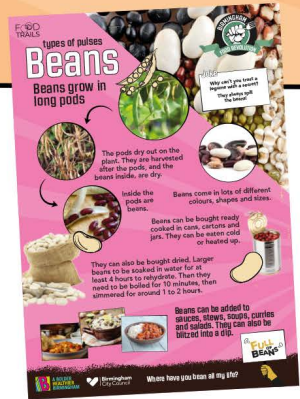




# Butter beans

## Look at the beans fact sheet

"These beans got their name because of their smooth and creamy texture, which reminds people of soft butter. Inside these beans are lots of nutrients which help us to grow strong and stay healthy. They are also known as Lima beans, and they are native to South America. They can be bought dried, tinned or in jars. Has anyone here tried butter beans before? How do you normally eat them and in what dishes?"



## Butter bean quiz:

### 1. What colour are the most commonly found butter beans?

- a. White or cream
- b. Brown
- c. Red
- d. Purple

Answer: a. white or cream

### 2. What is another name for butter beans?

- a. Green beans
- b. Runner beans
- c. Lima beans
- d. Kidney beans

Answer: c. Lima beans

### 3. True or false: butter beans have a sweet and tangy flavour

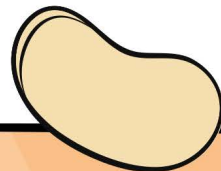
- a. True
- b. False

Answer: a. True

### 4. Butter beans are a good source of which nutrient?

- a. Fat
- b. Protein
- c. Calcium
- d. Vitamin D

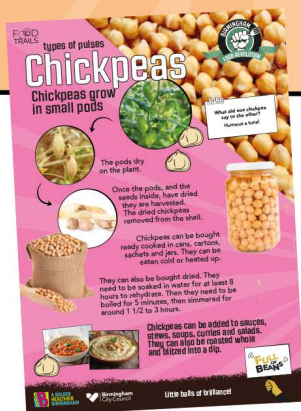
Answer: b. Protein



# Chickpeas

## Look at the chickpeas fact sheet

"Chickpeas are small round beans that have a nutty flavour. They can be enjoyed in many different ways. For example, they can be roasted which turns them into crunchy snacks or mashed into a dip called hummus. They can also be added to sauces, soups, stews, curries and salads. Has anyone here tried chickpeas before? How do you normally eat them and in what dishes?"



## Chickpea quiz:

### 1. What are chickpeas also known as?

- a. Jelly beans
- b. Baked beans
- c. Garbanzo beans
- d. Green beans

Answer: b. Garbanzo beans

### 2. What is the colour of a chickpea?

- a. Beige/cream
- b. Green
- c. Blue
- d. Black

Answer: a. Beige/cream

### 3. Which of the following flavours do chickpeas have?

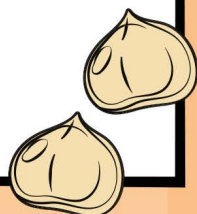
- a. Sour
- b. Sweet
- c. Spicy
- d. Nutty

Answer: d. Nutty

### 4. Which country produces the most chickpeas each year?

- a. India
- b. Mexico
- c. Australia
- d. Turkey

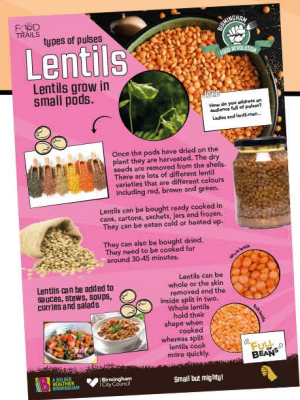
Answer: a. India



# Lentils

## Look at the lentils fact sheet

"Lentils are small, round seeds that come in various different colours and green is one of the most common types. They may be small, but they are powerhouses full of plant-based protein and other nutrients. They are a versatile ingredient and can be added to lots of dishes, such as soups and curries. Has anyone here tried lentils before? How do you normally eat them and in what dishes?"



## Lentils quiz:

### 1. What's the most common way to prepare lentils for eating?

- a. Boiling
- b. Baking
- c. Frying
- d. Grilling

Answer: a. Boiling

### 3. Which part of the legume plant do you find lentils growing?

- a. Roots
- b. Stem
- c. Leaves
- d. Pods

Answer: d. Pods

### 2. True or False: lentils can be used as a meat-substitute in vegetarian meals.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: a. True

### 4. What is the texture of cooked lentils?

- a. Crispy
- b. Soft and tender
- c. Crunchy
- d. Chewy

Answer: b. Soft and tender





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The Kids' Club Taste Testing Guide is packed full of fun activities you can do with children and young people in after school clubs, holiday clubs and youth groups. It gives children and young people the chance to taste and explore beans, as well as learning fun facts about why they are good for our bodies and the planet.



**A Birmingham Food Revolution Initiative**  
Find out more at [birmingham.gov.uk/FoodRevolution](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/FoodRevolution)

March 2024

