

Washing Lentils

Introduction

When you buy red split lentils for making soup, they can be filthy with bits of grass, seeds, bugs and muck.

When you cover the lentils with water for cooking, the water should be clear – not murky!

Before you use lentils, wash them, then wash them again.

Then wash them again!

I'm going to suggest two different methods that depend on the quantity of lentils you are washing.

Method 1

Best suited to small quantities of lentils (no more than 500g). They should be able to fit easily in a sieve so that it is no more than half full.

500g is also a common bag size from the supermarket and is good for making 10 portions of lentil soup in a single batch.

Pour the lentils into a sieve or colander and plunge into a large pot of water.

We are looking to keep the lentils in the sieve for the whole washing process.

Sloosh the lentils about until the water is getting dirty.

You might need to get your fingers in there to move them around and to help with the wash.

Remove the sieve of lentils and set aside on a bowl or plate. Do not empty the lentils out of the sieve.

Empty the pot of dirty water.

Replace the water with fresh, clean, water and repeat the wash – maybe as much as 3 or 4 times.

You will quickly see a massive difference in the colour of the water and, depending on the brand of lentils, you will have a visual guide to how many times you need to change the water.

Note: Some large bits of muck may get caught in the sieve and not be drained with the dirty water.

Method 2

Best suited for larger quantities of lentils – over 500g.

Tip the lentils into a large pot and fill with water.

Sloosh around for a minute with your hand or a spatula. Now drain the water from the pot. You should have a sieve to hand to catch any stray lentils as you empty the water.

This can be quite tricky as the pot gets very heavy and you probably need three hands!

You may not be able to get all the water out of the pot each cycle and this is a problem! As you drain the water, the dirt tends to concentrate in the bottom of the pan so it will take many more cycles to get the water clean.

Return all lentils to the pot and repeat 4 or 5 times.

This method can be a clert as you empty and refill the pot and the lentils stick to the sieve.

Although this is probably a better method for large quantities of lentils, if it's only a couple of Kg that I am washing, I'd use Method 1 in batches.



Lentils before and after washing

Note

Some suggest you could try holding the lentils in a sieve under running water for a few minutes, but I am not so keen on this method as you have no good indicator that the lentils are clean.

It is also a bit difficult to mix the water around the lentils to ensure they have all been cleaned. They really are very dirty and need a good clean!