A LENTIL TO LOVE

Some lentils get all the attention. Don’t get us wrong. We love brown lentils, and the lentil soup, lentil soup, and lentil soup that are pretty much the only places most people encounter them.

But brown lentils aren’t the only legumes on the block. Red lentils, their less-famous cousins, are worth getting to know.

Their main claim to fame: speed. Reds cook up—simmered in three times as much water or broth as lentils—in as little as 10 minutes. Cook them for 15 to 20 minutes and they turn to a stick-to-the-ribs coarse purée. (Brown lentils typically take 30 minutes or more.)

Then the fun begins. Add some curry powder, garlic, onion, fresh ginger, and fresh cilantro and you’ve got a dish that would be at home in New Delhi. Make it garlic, onion, red pepper flakes, and crushed tomato and you’re in Rome. Athens? No sweat. Mix in sautéed green pepper, dill, oregano, and sliced scallions.

Wait. There’s more. Looking to pump up your protein or fiber? Add some unseasoned cooked red lentils to your spaghetti sauce or chili or stew, or your puréed sweet potato, butternut squash, or carrots.

Each ¼ cup of dry red lentils (which makes ¾ cup when cooked) packs 9 grams of fiber and 13 grams of protein, plus roughly 25 percent of a day’s folate, 15 percent of a day’s iron, 14 percent of a day’s zinc, 9 percent of a day’s magnesium, and 6 percent of a day’s potassium. Not bad for 180 calories, zero sodium, and around 25 cents per serving.

Sometimes it’s good to be overlooked.

SO CHEESY


Each of Chili’s four new “freshly made” pizzas may look “perfectly sized” to some people. But only if they’re in the market for an entrée that has three-quarters of a day’s calories.

Take the Southwestern Chicken Pizza. It’s “topped with chile-rubbed grilled chicken, chipotle pesto, cheddar, mozzarella, Monterey and pepper Jack, green & red bell peppers, red onion and house-made pico de gallo.”

Don’t blame the grilled chicken for the Southwestern’s 1,550 calories and 32 grams of saturated fat—more than any Pizza Hut Personal Pan or California Pizza Kitchen pizza. It’s like eating a Chili’s 10 oz. Classic Sirloin steak dinner (with Loaded Mashed Potatoes and Steamed Broccoli), with a 10 oz. Classic Sirloin on the side.

The Five Cheese, Taco, and Pepperoni Pizzas are in the same ballpark. Each is loaded with three to five different cheeses (like cheddar, Monterey Jack, and Pepper Jack), not just mozzarella.

And each comes on a thick, white-flour crust that accounts for 630 of the pizza’s calories. (It may be “house-baked,” but it looks like no one in the house knows how to make a decent crust.) Judging by the pizzas’ sodium (2,400 to 3,500 milligrams), the house does know how to wield a salt shaker, though.

“Perfectly sized just for you”? Only if you want to be a size XXL.

Chili’s: (800) 983-4637