


Chickpea

Chickpea	
	
Varieties Left, Bengal (Indian); right, European	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Fabales
Family:	Fabaceae
Genus:	<i>Cicer</i>
Species:	<i>C. arietinum</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Cicer arietinum</i> L.	

The **chickpea** (*Cicer arietinum*) is a legume of the family Fabaceae, subfamily Faboideae. Its seeds are high in protein. It is one of the earliest cultivated legumes: 7,500-year-old remains have been found in the Middle East.^[1]

Other common names for the species include **garbanzo bean**, **ceci bean**, **chana**, **sanagalu**, Gonzo Bean and **Bengal gram**.

Etymology

The name "chickpea" traces back through the French *chiche* to *cicer*, Latin for 'chickpea' (from which the Roman cognomen Cicero was taken). The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists a 1548 citation that reads, "*Cicer* may be named in English Cich, or ciche pease, after the Frenche tonge." The dictionary cites "Chick-pea" in the mid-18th century; the original word in English taken directly from French was *chich*, found in print in English in 1388 and became obsolete in the 18th century.

The word *garbanzo* came to English as "calavance" in the 17th century, from Old Spanish (perhaps influenced by Old Spanish *garroba* or *algarroba*), though it came to refer to a variety of other beans (*cf.* Calavance). The Portuguese (?) *arvanço* has suggested to some that the origin of the word *garbanzo* is in the Greek *erebinthos*.^[2] But the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that some scholars doubt this; it also mentions a possible origination in the word

garbantzu, from Basque — a non-Indo-European tongue — in which it is a compound of *garau*, seed + *antzu*, dry.

History

Domesticated chickpeas have been found in the aceramic levels of Jericho (PPNB) along with Cayönü in Turkey and in Neolithic pottery at Hacilar, Turkey. They are found in the late Neolithic (about 3500 BCE) at Thessaly, Kastanas, Lerna and Dimini. In southern France Mesolithic layers in a cave at L'Abeurador, Aude have yielded wild chickpeas carbon dated to 6790±90 BCE.^[3]

By the Bronze Age, chickpeas were known in Italy and Greece. In classical Greece, they were called *erébinthos* and eaten as a staple, a dessert, or consumed raw when young. The Romans knew several varieties such as *venus*, *ram*, and *punic* chickpeas. They were both cooked down into a broth and roasted as a snack. The Roman gourmet Apicius gives several recipes for chickpeas. Carbonized chickpeas have been found at the Roman legion fort at Neuss (Novaesium), Germany in layers from the first century CE, along with rice.

Chickpeas are mentioned in Charlemagne's *Capitulare de villis* (about 800 CE) as *cicer italicum*, as grown in each imperial demesne. Albertus Magnus mentions red, white and black varieties. Nicholas Culpeper noted "chick-pease or cicers" are less "windy" than peas and more nourishing. Ancient people also associated chickpeas with Venus because they were said to offer medical uses such as increasing sperm and milk, provoking menstruation and urine and helping to treat kidney stones.^[4] "White cicers" were thought to be especially strong and helpful.^[4]

In 1793, ground-roast chickpeas were noted by a German writer as a coffee substitute in Europe. In the First World War, they were grown for this use in some areas of Germany. They are still sometimes brewed instead of coffee.^{[5][6]}



Manchego cuisine; chickpea and *Silene vulgaris* stew. (*Potaje de garbanzos y collejas*)



Chakhchoukha in Algerian cuisine; freshly cooked *Marqa* before mixing with *Rougag*.



Green chickpea

Description

The plant grows to between 20–50 cm (8–20 inches) high and has small feathery leaves on either side of the stem. Chickpeas are a type of pulse, with one seedpod containing two or three peas. It has white flowers with blue, violet or pink veins. Chickpeas need a subtropical or tropical climate with more than 400 millimetres (16 in) of annual rain. They can be grown in a temperate climate but yields will be much lower.

Types

There are two main kinds of chickpea:

- Desi, which has small, darker seeds and a rough coat, cultivated mostly in the Indian subcontinent, Ethiopia, Mexico, and Iran.
- Kabuli, which has lighter coloured, larger seeds and a smoother coat, mainly grown in Southern Europe, Northern Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Chile, also introduced during the 18th century to the Indian subcontinent.^[7]

The *Desi* (meaning 'country' or 'local' in Hindi) is also known as Bengal gram or kala chana. *Kabuli* (meaning 'from Kabul' in Hindi, since they were thought to have come from Afghanistan when first seen in India) or *safed chana* is the kind widely grown throughout the Mediterranean. *Desi* is likely the earliest form since it closely resembles seeds found both on archaeological sites and the wild plant ancestor (*Cicer reticulatum*) of domesticated chickpeas, which only grows in southeast Turkey, where it is believed to have originated. *Desi* chickpeas have a markedly higher fiber content than Kabulis and hence a very low glycemic index which may make them suitable for people with blood sugar problems.^[8] The desi type is used to make Chana Dal, which is a split chickpea with the skin removed.

Cultivation and use

Chickpeas are grown in the Mediterranean, western Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Australia.



Flowering chickpea plant

Mature chickpeas can be cooked and eaten cold in salads, cooked in stews, ground into a flour called gram flour (also known as chickpea flour and *besan* and used frequently in Indian cuisine), ground and shaped in balls and fried as falafel, stirred into a batter and baked to make farinata.

Hummus is the Arabic word for chickpeas, which are often cooked and ground into a paste and mixed with *tahini*, sesame seed paste, the blend called *hummus bi tahini*, or chickpeas are roasted, spiced, and eaten as a snack, such as *leblebi*. By the end of the 20th century, hummus had emerged as part of the American culinary fabric.^[9] By 2010, 5% of Americans consumed hummus on a regular basis,^[9] and it was present in 17% of American households.^[10]

Some varieties of chickpeas can even be popped and eaten like popcorn.^[11]

Chickpeas and Bengal grams are used to make curries and are one of the most popular vegetarian foods in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the UK. On the Indian subcontinent, green chickpeas are called *Chana* (चना) in Gujarati *Harbharaa* in Marathi, while other varieties are known as *Kadale Kaalu* in Kannada, *Shanaga* (శనగ) in Telugu, *chana* in Hindi and other Indic languages, small brown peas are called Chhola (*ghoogni* when cooked) and the whitish bigger variety is called *Kabuli Chhola* in Bengali and *Konda Kadalai* in Tamil,^[12] where they are a major



White and green chickpeas.

source of protein in a mostly vegetarian culture. Typically Chana in Hindi and Punjabi might refer to both varieties, as might chhole, but the former is more the green hard small variety while the latter is the large creamy softer one and also the more popular dish served around the region at home and at celebrations.

Many popular dishes in Indian cuisine are made with chickpea flour, such as *Mirchi Bajji* and *Mirapakaya bajji Telugu*. In India, as well as in the Levant, unripe chickpeas are often picked out of the pod and eaten as a raw snack and the leaves are eaten as a green vegetable in salads. Chickpea flour is also used to make "Burmese tofu" which was first known among the Shan people of Burma. The flour is used as a batter to coat various vegetables and meats before frying, such as with *panelle*, a chickpea fritter from Sicily.^[13] Chickpea flour is also used to make the Mediterranean flatbread *socca*, and a patty called *panisse* in Provence, southern France, made of cooked chickpea flour, poured into saucers, allowed to set, cut in strips, and fried in olive oil, often eaten during Lent.

In the Philippines, garbanzo beans preserved in syrup are eaten as sweets and in desserts such as halo-halo. Ashkenazi Jews traditionally serve whole chickpeas at a Shalom Zachar celebration for baby boys.^[14]

Guasanas is a chickpea recipe made in Mexico with fried in water and salt.^[15]

Dried chickpeas need a long cooking time (1–2 hours) but will easily fall apart when cooked longer. If soaked for 12–24 hours before use, cooking time can be shortened by around 30 minutes. To make smooth hummus the cooked chickpeas must be processed while quite hot, since the skins disintegrate only when hot.

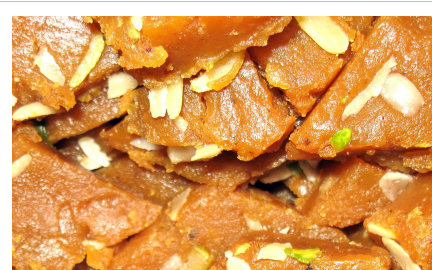
Chickpeas (*Cicer arietinum*) do not cause lathyrism. Similarly named "chickling peas" (*Lathyrus sativus*) and other plants of the genus *Lathyrus* contain the toxins associated with lathyrism.

Production

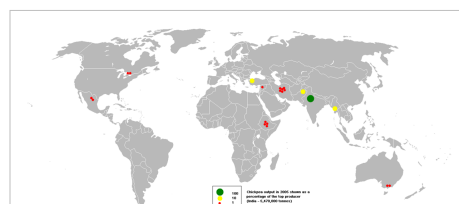
India is the world leader in chickpea (Bengal gram) production followed by Pakistan and Turkey.














Chana masala, a popular dish from Punjab, India.



Halua of chickpeas, a popular sweet dish of Bangladesh.



Chickpea output in 2005.

Top ten chickpeas producers — 11 June 2008		
Country	Production (Tonnes)	Footnote
 India	5,970,000	
 Pakistan	842,000	
 Turkey	523,000	
 Australia	313,000	
 Iran	310,000	F
 Myanmar	225,000	F
 Canada	215,000	
 Ethiopia	190,000	F
 Mexico	165,000	F
 Iraq	85,000	F
 United States	75,000 ^[16] (2012)	C
World	9,000,000	A

No symbol=official figure, F=FAO estimate, *=Unofficial/Semi-official/mirror data,
C=Calculated figure, A=Aggregate (may include official, semi-official or estimates);
Source: Food And Agricultural Organization of United Nations: Economic And Social Department: The Statistical Division ^[17], faostat.fao.org

Nutrition

Chickpeas, mature seeds, cooked no salt

Nutritional value per 100 g (3.5 oz)	
Energy	686 kJ (164 kcal)
Carbohydrates	27.42 g
- Sugars	4.8 g
- Dietary fiber	7.6 g
Fat	2.59 g
- saturated	0.269 g
- monounsaturated	0.583 g
- polyunsaturated	1.156 g
Protein	8.86 g
Water	60.21 g
Vitamin A equiv.	1 µg (0%)
Thiamine (vit. B ₁)	0.116 mg (10%)
Riboflavin (vit. B ₂)	0.063 mg (5%)
Niacin (vit. B ₃)	0.526 mg (4%)
Pantothenic acid (B ₅)	0.286 mg (6%)
Vitamin B ₆	0.139 mg (11%)

Folate (vit. B ₉)	172 µg (43%)
Vitamin B ₁₂	0 µg (0%)
Vitamin C	1.3 mg (2%)
Vitamin E	0.35 mg (2%)
Vitamin K	4 µg (4%)
Calcium	49 mg (5%)
Iron	2.89 mg (22%)
Magnesium	48 mg (14%)
Phosphorus	168 mg (24%)
Potassium	291 mg (6%)
Sodium	7 mg (0%)
Zinc	1.53 mg (16%)
Percentages are relative to US recommendations for adults. Source: USDA Nutrient Database ^[18]	

Chickpeas are a helpful source of zinc, folate and protein.^{[19][20]} Chickpeas are low in fat and most of this is polyunsaturated. Nutrient profile of desi chana (the smaller variety) is different, especially the fibre content which is much higher than the light coloured variety. One hundred grams of mature boiled chickpeas contains 164 calories, 2.6 grams of fat (of which only 0.27 grams is saturated), 7.6 grams of dietary fiber and 8.9 grams of protein. Chickpeas also provide dietary phosphorus (49–53 mg/100 g), with some sources citing the garbanzo's content as about the same as yogurt and close to milk.

Recent studies have also shown that they can assist in lowering of cholesterol in the bloodstream.^{[21][22]}

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External links

- Crop Wild Relatives GapAnalysis portal (<http://gisweb.ciat.cgiar.org/GapAnalysis/?p=98>): reliable information source on where and what to conserve *ex-situ*, regarding *Cicer* genepool, gisweb.ciat.cgiar.org
- History and nutrition of chickpeas (<http://www.cai-sa.pt/graodebico.en.html>), Casa Angola Internacional, Portugal (commercial site, in English), cai-sa.pt
- Unripe (or green) chickpea (aka garbanzo, or pois chiches) beans are called *guasana*, in Mexico and other Latin American countries, which are often eaten raw out of the pod like edamame (immature soy beans)
- WHfood.org (<http://whfoods.org/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=58>)
- Nutritional value, mineral content, parameters used in trade (http://www.surbasant.com/index_files/WhitwChickPeas.htm)
- Google Ngram Viewer: relative frequency of synonyms for *Cicer arietinum* in the English language 1770-2000 (http://ngrams.googlelabs.com/graph?content=chich,chickpea,garbanzo,Indian+pea,ceci+bean,Bengal+gram&year_start=1770&year_end=2000&corpus=0&smoothing=0)
- Heat and mass transfer during cooking of chickpeas (PDF) (<http://library2.usask.ca/theses/available/etd-03022005-153357/unrestricted/NalainiThesis.pdf>)

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