

# Unexpected heroes

## save the day

### Why planet Earth and its people need pulses

Have you ever looked at the beans on your plate and wondered why you have to eat them? They don't look as healthy as vegetables, and they're definitely not as nice as that yummy slice of pizza! Many people just give them a skip, but now you will discover how wrong people are about beans.

**T**hose ordinary-looking beans on your plate belong to a food group called the "pulses." Pulses, which belong to the legume family, and grow in pods and are harvested as dried seeds. They've been grown all over the world for thousands of years already! There are many types of pulses, but the most well-known ones are dried beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas.

Beans

Peas

Lentils

Chickpeas



### Pulses: Keeping us healthy and strong

When a plant makes seed, it needs to pack in enough good nutrients for a baby plant to use for survival and growth until it can make its own food. So when you eat seeds, you get all this good stuff that was meant for the new seedling. Pulses are especially jam-packed with protein (to keep your body working the way it should), fibre (to keep your tummy moving), vitamin B (to give you energy). They're also low in fat and salt so they help fight diseases like obesity, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol. As an added bonus, pulses are cheap, making it easy for poor people to get good quality food.



### 2016 International Year of Pulses

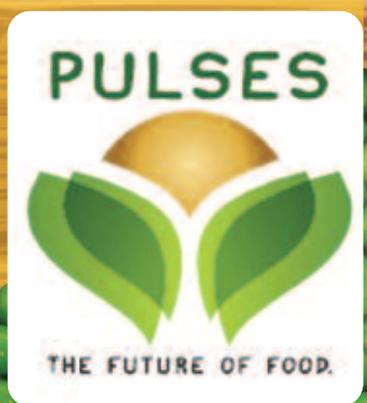
The United Nations declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses so that they can tell everyone about the high nutritional content of pulses. Because pulses can do so much good for the world, they will motivate people to eat pulses as a source of protein and help solve farmers' pulse-growing problems.

### Pulses: Keeping our air clean and saving water

Nitrogen is a critical ingredient for building proteins, but though there is lots of it in the air, most plants can't absorb it from there. Plants get it from the soil, but farmers usually feed them extra nitrogen in fertilizer, which is expensive and pollutes the air. Pulses don't need this fertilizer, because they've found a way to get nitrogen from the air for themselves.

In a water-scarce country like South Africa, you need to consider how much water your food costs to make. Growing a kilogram of beef uses 7029 litres of water – that's enough water to bath in more than 50 times! Pulses do much better, because they use twenty times less water to grow than raising a cow.

Do you agree that pulses can save the day for us and our planet? By eating them, you keep yourself super healthy and strong, but you also become a hero that can help save our planet.



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