

Low GI Daily Menu: Middle Eastern Legumes Day

Saturday 24 October 2026 | Middle Eastern legumes | Recipes & method (serves 2)

Spring is a lovely time to lean into the warm, earthy flavours of the Middle East. Today's menu celebrates legumes in three different forms - fava beans, lentils and chickpeas - each paired with wholegrain carbs, fresh herbs and plenty of vegetables to keep blood glucose steady all day.

Daily total per person (approx.): 122 g carbs | 33 g fibre | 67 g protein | 1200 kcal

BREAKFAST

LOW GI

Ful Medames with Soft Eggs and Tomato-Cucumber Salad

Creamy spiced fava beans topped with soft-boiled eggs, served with a bright herby salad and warm wholegrain pita.

Prep 10 min | Cook 12 min | Serves 2

Per serve: 36 g carbs | 10 g fibre | 18 g protein | 14 g fat | 380 kcal

Ingredients

- 400 g tin broad beans (fava beans), drained and rinsed
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 eggs
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, diced
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- small handful fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 wholegrain pita breads, warmed

Method

1. Heat oil in a small saucepan and saute garlic and cumin for 1 minute until fragrant.
2. Add broad beans with a splash of water, lightly mash with a fork and simmer 5 minutes; stir in lemon juice, salt and pepper.
3. Meanwhile, soft-boil eggs for 6-7 minutes, then cool slightly and peel.
4. Toss cucumber, tomato and parsley with a drizzle of olive oil and extra lemon juice.
5. Spoon fava bean mash into bowls, top with halved eggs, and serve with the salad and warm pita.

Why it's low GI: Fava beans and wholegrain pita are low GI, slow-digesting carbohydrates, while eggs and olive oil add protein and healthy fat to further flatten the blood glucose response.

Tip: Make extra fava bean mash and keep in the fridge for 2 days - it reheats well for a quick breakfast.

Drink: Fresh mint tea (unsweetened)

Mujadara with Caramelised Onions and Herb Salad

Comforting lentils and basmati rice slow-cooked with warm spices, finished with sweet caramelised onions, yoghurt and a fresh herb salad.

Prep 10 min | Cook 25 min | Serves 2

Per serve: 42 g carbs | 11 g fibre | 15 g protein | 12 g fat | 360 kcal

Ingredients

- 100 g (1/2 cup) brown lentils, rinsed
- 75 g (1/3 cup) basmati rice, rinsed
- 2 brown onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 500 ml salt-reduced vegetable stock
- 140 g (1/2 cup) natural unsweetened yoghurt
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, diced
- small handful each fresh mint and parsley, chopped

Method

1. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan and cook onions slowly over low-medium heat for 15-20 minutes until deeply golden; season lightly.
2. Meanwhile, combine lentils, rice, cumin, coriander and stock in a saucepan; bring to the boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer 20 minutes until tender and liquid is absorbed.
3. Toss cucumber with mint, parsley, remaining olive oil and a squeeze of lemon.
4. Fluff the lentil-rice mixture and top generously with caramelised onions.
5. Serve with a dollop of yoghurt and the herb salad on the side.

Why it's low GI: Lentils are a low GI legume high in resistant starch and fibre, and pairing them with a modest portion of basmati rice keeps the overall carbohydrate load moderate and slow-releasing.

Tip: Caramelise a double batch of onions on the weekend and freeze half for next time - it's the step that takes the longest.

Drink: Sparkling water with lemon slices

Moroccan Chicken and Chickpea Tagine with Quinoa

Tender chicken and chickpeas simmered with warming spices, carrot, zucchini and dried apricots, served over fluffy quinoa.

Prep 15 min | Cook 30 min | Serves 2

Per serve: 44 g carbs | 12 g fibre | 34 g protein | 14 g fat | 460 kcal

Ingredients

- 300 g chicken thigh fillets, trimmed and diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 brown onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp paprika
- 400 g tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 400 g tin diced tomatoes, no added salt
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 4 dried apricots, chopped
- 150 g (3/4 cup) quinoa, rinsed
- 150 g green beans, trimmed
- small handful fresh coriander, chopped

Method

1. Heat oil in a large pan and brown chicken pieces for 3-4 minutes; remove and set aside.
2. Add onion and garlic to the pan and cook until softened, then stir in cinnamon, cumin and paprika for 1 minute.
3. Return chicken to the pan with chickpeas, tomatoes, carrot, zucchini and apricots; cover and simmer 20 minutes until chicken is cooked and vegetables are tender.
4. Meanwhile, cook quinoa according to packet directions and steam green beans until just tender.
5. Spoon tagine over quinoa, scatter with coriander and serve with green beans.

Why it's low GI: Chickpeas and quinoa are both low GI, high-fibre foods that slow glucose absorption, while lean chicken thigh and olive oil add protein and healthy fat for a balanced, steady-energy dinner.

Tip: This tagine freezes well for up to 3 months - make a double batch for an easy future dinner.

Drink: Sparkling water with lemon and mint

Why this menu helps

Each meal centres on a different low GI legume - fava beans, lentils and chickpeas - which digest slowly and help prevent sharp blood glucose spikes. Pairing these legumes with modest, measured portions of wholegrain carbs like pita, basmati rice and quinoa keeps total carbohydrate moderate and consistent across the day. Lean protein from eggs, yoghurt and chicken, plus healthy fats from olive oil, slow digestion

further and support steady energy. Generous vegetables and fresh herbs in every meal add fibre, vitamins and volume without extra carbohydrate.

Nutrition values are estimates per serve and will vary with brands and portion sizes. Everyone's needs are different; talk to your GP, accredited practising dietitian or credentialled diabetes educator about the right amount of carbohydrate for you, and check your blood glucose as advised.