

Microwave Cooked Rice and Lentils for Feathered Companions

By Marcy Covault

All of these ingredients are human quality, from Sun Harvest, HEB, or Wal-Mart Super Store. You can make your own combos using a variety of beans, peas, corn, etc., but some of the harder beans, like pintos would need to soak overnight and require longer cooking, so I don't use them.

I buy and mix the following in a large container, then cook as needed. The proportions can be varied depending on what you have and what your birds like best. (This mix averages under \$1 per pound in cost, versus \$3-\$5 per pound for the specialty birdie cook mixes!)

1# pearly barley, raw clipped barley, or hard red winter wheat berries

1# lentils (any kind)

1# green or yellow split peas

2# brown rice

Optional:

¼ cup dried red peppers

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon cinnamon powder

1 tablespoon ginger root powder

The following makes a little over 5 cups of cooked mix. Fill a 6 cup microwave bowl with 3 cups of water, and add 2 cups of the mix. The bowl should be about 3/4 full when this is all added and the water should be about 1" over the top of the ingredients. Microwave on 90% (depending on your microwave strength) for 20 minutes. You want it to boil, but not boil over, so you may have to adjust the microwave power level. Let cool a bit—the water should be mostly absorbed, but the ingredients will still be a bit firm. That's fine because you don't want it to be mushy. Put into covered containers and refrigerate, or freeze in ice cube trays if you make more than 3 days worth. *Note: this makes quite a bit of mix—you should adjust to your needs.*

Don't leave out more than a few hours (during the day is fine). Any longer, and I'd worry about bacteria growth, particularly in warm weather.

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