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of the  
English  
Language


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**hu·mus**<sup>1</sup>  (hy məs)

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*n.*

A brown or black organic substance consisting of partially or wholly decayed vegetable or animal matter that provides nutrients for plants and increases the ability of soil to retain water.

[Latin, soil; see **dhghem-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.](#)]

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**hum·us**<sup>2</sup>  (h m əs, hūm -)

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*n.*

Variant of [hummus](#).

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**hum·mus** also **hum·us** or **hom·mos**  (h m əs, hūm -)

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*n.*

A smooth thick mixture of mashed chickpeas, tahini, oil, lemon juice, and garlic, used especially as a dip for pita.

[Colloquial Arabic *ḥummuṣ*, chickpeas, variant of Arabic *ḥimmaṣ*, *ḥimmiṣ*, possibly of Aramaic origin; akin to Syriac *ḥem(m)ṣē*, chickpeas.]

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## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

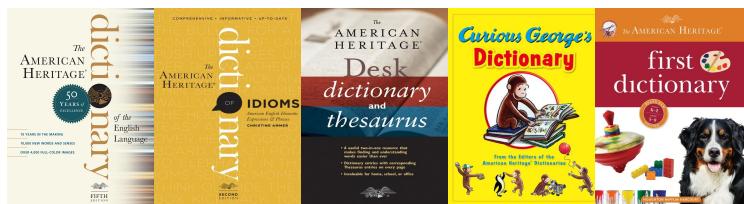
[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available

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