About Dried Beans

Beans are a good source of protein and minerals. When combined with a whole grain such as rice or corn, they provide protein comparable to that of meat or dairy foods. Current guidelines suggest we eat at least 3 cups of beans per week. Dried beans are more economical than canned.

Try cooking a pound of beans once per week (you can freeze small amounts in their cooking liquid if you want). Use them in everything from soup, pasta sauce, and mashed potatoes, to tuna salad. Stuff beans in baked squash or zucchini boats, mix them with greens (add soy sauce for an Asian direction, currants and pine nuts for an Italian one), and don't forget the burritos, quesadillas, and wraps. Did you know? Bean dishes thicken as they cool and their seasonings and flavors continue to deepen. That's why bean dishes are often even better the next day.

Storage

Store dried beans in a cool, dark, dry place like a pantry or cupboard. Mark the date on the containers and use within 1 year. The older the beans, the drier and harder they become and the longer they take to cook.

Easy on Digestion

Beans have a reputation for causing gas, but actually, they don't have to! Here are some ways to avoid it:

- -Don't use old beans!
- -Rinse beans well after soaking. This helps remove substances that cause gas.
- -Cook beans with a 3-inch strip of kombu seaweed (available in many food co-ops bulk departments) to make them more digestible while adding valuable minerals.
- -Don't add any salt or acid (such as canned tomatoes) to beans while they are cooking this toughens them. Add these ingredients toward the end.

Soaking & cooking dried beans

Soaking: Measure out beans and enough cold water to cover them in a large bowl or pot and soak 8 hours or overnight. The smaller the bean, the less time it needs to soak - for example, black beans can be soaked in the morning and cooked in the evening.

Quick-soak method: A same-day method that works best with smaller beans. Measure out beans and bring to a boil with 3 times the amount of water. Turn off the heat, cover the pot, and set aside for 1-2 hours before proceeding with cooking.

Cooking: Rinse and drain pre-soaked beans and place in a pot with 3 times the amount of water, or amount specified by the recipe (it should be enough to amply cover the beans).

Optional: Add a strip of kombu seaweed to increase the flavor and digestibility of the beans as they cook (available in our Bulk section near the spices). You can also add onion, garlic, ginger, or spices - but no salt at this point. Bring water to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer with the lid ajar until beans are tender. Seasoning and serving: When beans are tender, drain off any extra water or blend the water in to make soup. Season to taste with salt.

Cooking times

1 cup of dried beans yields between 2-3 cups of cooked beans. For 1 cup of beans, use the following amount of water and cooking times

after pre-soaking:

1 cup beans (serves 2-3)	Water	Cooking time
Adzuki beans	2" to cover	1 hour
Appaloosa Purple		
& White beans	cc	1 1/2-2 hours
Anasazi beans	22	1 1/2-2 hours
Black Turtle beans	cc	1 ½ hours
Cannellini beans	ee	1 ½ hours
Cranberry beans	cc	1 1/2-2 hours
Christmas Lima beans	LL.	1 ½-2 hours
Flagolet beans	cc	1 ½-2 hours
Garbanzo beans (chick peas)	ee ee	2-3 hours
Great Northern	cc	2-0 1100125
beans		1½-2 hours
Kidney beans	cc	1 ½ hours
King of the Early beans	cc	1 ½-2 hours
Lima beans	cc	1 ½ hours
Maine Yellow-	cc	
Eye beans	66	1 ½-2 hours
Marifax beans	66	1 ½-2 hours
Mung beans	- 66	45-60 min.
Navy beans	66	1 ½ hours
Pinto beans		1 ½ hours
Red Chili beans	cc	1 ½ hours
Rice beans	no pre-soak	15-30 min.
Soy beans	cc	1 1/2-2 hours

Local Beans

Supply of local beans is currently limited. Vermont's farmers are currently producing Yellow Eye Beans, Black Beans, Jacob's Cattle Beans, and Soldier Beans.

Time Saving Tricks

Use a pressure cooker

If you have a pressure cooker, there is no need to soak the beans ahead of time and the cook times will be much shorter. Simply put the dry beans in the bottom of the pot, cover with several inches of water and turn on the heat. Bring the pot up to pressure and then turn down the heat to a simmer. Most beans will cook in about ½ an hour.

Freeze cooked beans

Cook a large quantity of beans at the same time, then portion off into smaller sized containers and freeze. Frozen beans will be good for months are just as easy to use as canned beans when you're looking for a quick supper.