

Food from the Field

Dry beans come in an exciting variety of colors, shapes, sizes, and flavors. Pacific Northwest-grown beans offer freshness, great taste, diversity, and many health benefits. Look for freshly harvested dry beans August through October.

Selecting Dry Beans

- Select pods that look full and plump, but are thoroughly dried.
- Remove beans from pod to cook or store.
- Remove any rocks or foreign matter.
- Do not eat raw beans.

Storage

- Store dry beans in a sealed container in a cool, dry place for 6-12 months.
- Cooked beans can be refrigerated in their cooking water for 3-5 days.
- Cook more than you need then store for up to 6 months in the freezer.

Cooking

Beans triple in size, so start with a large pot. Wash, soak (see next column), and rinse the beans, then add fresh water. Use 10 cups water for every 2 cups of dry beans—don't skimp—they need water to absorb as well as water to cook in. Boil for 10 minutes, then simmer for 1 to 2 hours, until tender. Simmer gently to prevent split skins. Add a tablespoon of oil to prevent foaming. Taste-test for doneness—beans should be tender but not mushy. Never add salt or acid ingredients (wine, tomatoes, vinegar, or citrus juice) until beans are tender, or else they will not fully cook. Add herbs and spices at anytime.

Cool beans in cooking liquid to keep them from drying out. When reheating cooked beans, add a tablespoon or two of water if necessary to moisten.

Soaking

Beans are full of fiber, however some fiber is not easily digested. The following preparation techniques will enhance digestion of beans so that you can enjoy all of their health benefits.

- *Gradually* increase the amount of beans you eat, so your digestive system can adjust.
- Soak beans overnight then discard the soaking water. Some, but not all, of the hard-to-digest carbohydrates dissolve into the water and are then poured off.
- The quick soak method: cover beans with water. Bring to a boil for 2-3 minutes then turn off heat. Let sit at least one hour, but preferably four hours. The longer beans soak, the easier they are to digest.
- Soaking also shortens cooking time, which saves energy!

Using Dry Beans

The adaptable bean adds great flavor and texture to soups, salads, main dishes and even desserts.

- Add beans to your favorite spaghetti sauce.
- Use beans with corn or flour tortillas—in burritos, enchiladas, tacos and wraps.
- Use cooked beans to add texture and give a protein boost to salad or mixed vegetables
- Use beans in desserts such as black bean brownies, great northern bean apple cinnamon muffins, and navy bean oatmeal chocolate chip cookies.

Why Should We Eat Dry Beans?

- They **taste great** and are very versatile!
- When eaten along with grains, beans form a good quality **complete protein**, which is also low in fat.
- **Fiber-rich** dry beans
 - Help your colon stay healthy.
 - Lower blood cholesterol levels.
- Colorful bean skins contain **flavonoids**, which are powerful antioxidants that may help prevent cancer and heart disease.
- Beans contain minerals, notably **calcium**, **potassium** and **iron**.

Mineral	Dry Beans, Mineral Content, ½ cup cooked (mg)	Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) (mg) Based on Healthy Adults.
Calcium	16-64	1000
Potassium	500	3500
Iron	2	8 (males) 18 (females)

- **Folate** is a **B-vitamin** that helps fight heart disease and prevent certain birth defects. One-half cup of most varieties of cooked beans supplies about 25% of the adult RDA for this vitamin. Beans contain good amounts of other B-vitamins too, such as **thiamin**.

Bean Arithmetic
1 pound = 2 cups dry beans = 6 cups cooked

Enjoying Dry Beans

Try this delicious introduction to dry beans—your family and friends will ask for more!

Bean Dip

3 cups cooked beans (black, pinto or white kidney)
4 cloves garlic
1/3 cup olive oil
1 lemon
1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cumin
2 teaspoon dry oregano
2 teaspoon dry red pepper flakes

Soak, strain and cook dry beans until they are tender, but still hold their shape. (See Cooking Section of brochure for details). Mince the garlic in a food processor. Add all other ingredients to the food processor and blend well.

Enjoy Black Bean Dip with carrots, bell peppers and bread, or spread on a tortilla as a component of a quesadilla.

For more bean recipes:

- North Dakota State University, http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1646_full.pdf
- American Bean Board, www.americanbean.org
- Idaho Bean Commission, www2.state.id.us/bean
- *The Instant Bean* by Sally and Martin Stone, Bantam Books, New York, 1996).

Most vegetarian cookbooks have entire sections devoted to dry beans.

Food from the Field

Local farmers provide fresh foods for your table. Buying local produce not only gives you fresh, nutritious food, but also enhances your community in these ways:

- Keeps small farmers in business and supports the local economy.
- Preserves farmland and open space in your area.
- Conserves natural resources—less fuel used in transportation and packaging.
- Preserves the environment with responsible use of water, fewer farm chemicals, and less air pollution.

If these things are important to you, visit a farmers' market weekly during the growing season, join a CSA, and look for local produce at your grocery store. Make a difference with your food dollars!



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This publication was produced by Washington State University Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center. Written by Carol Miles, Kelly Atterberry and Gayle Povis Alleman, 2013. Artwork by Katie Sandbom. For more information visit our web site <http://vegetables.wsu.edu>



Bountiful, delicious, and an inexpensive source of protein