

# BEANS COOKING GUIDE



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In addition to being delicious and versatile, beans are nutrient powerhouses—rich in protein, folate, magnesium and other compounds. (Choose darker-colored beans for the biggest benefits; research suggests that black, red and brown beans are richest in antioxidants.) Most beans are high in both soluble and insoluble fiber, and the carbohydrates they contain are slowly digested, which helps keep blood-sugar levels steady. That makes beans especially filling and satisfying, even though they're fairly low in calories—about 100 to 125 calories per half-cup serving. And they're inexpensive. You can buy a can of beans for less than a dollar; most dried beans are just a dollar or two per pound.

**AIM TO EAT ½ CUP OF BEANS A DAY.** Add them to soups, stews and salads and make entrees like chili, bean enchiladas or *pasta e fagiole* (with beans) part of your weekly repertoire.

Cooking dried beans from scratch is easy to do with a little advance planning, gives you best flavor and lets you control the sodium in your beans. But there's no denying that canned beans are wonderfully convenient, and may help you to eat beans more regularly. Keeping both types on hand is a great idea.

## CANNED BEANS

Stocking your pantry with a variety of canned of beans will ensure you have a truly convenient protein source at your fingertips. Add

white beans to a pasta dish, garbanzos to a salad loaded with vegetables or tuck black beans into your tacos. But while we love the convenience of canned beans, they tend to be high in sodium. Give them a good rinse before adding to a recipe to rid them of some of their sodium (up to 35 percent) or opt for low-sodium or no-salt-added varieties.

## DRIED BEANS

Our preferred method for cooking most types of dried beans is to soak them first, to shorten their cooking time. (Lentils and split peas do not need to be soaked, as they cook quickly.) For the best results, use the overnight soaking method; if you're in a hurry and don't mind risking a few burst bean skins, use the quick-soak method.

- **Overnight Soak** Rinse and pick over the beans, then place them in a large bowl with enough cold water to cover them by 2 inches. Let the beans soak for at least 8 hours or overnight. (For longer soaking, or in warm weather, place the bowl of beans in the refrigerator.) Drain.
- **Quick Soak** Rinse and pick over the beans, then place them in a large pot with enough cold water to cover them by 2 inches. Bring to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand, covered, for 1 hour; drain.

Once they're soaked, cook beans using one of the following methods:

- **Conventional Method:** Place the drained, soaked beans in a large pot and add enough cold water to cover them by 2 inches (about 2 quarts of water for 1 pound of beans). Bring to a boil, skimming off any debris that rises to the surface. Reduce the heat to low and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until the beans are tender, 1 to 2 hours (cooking time will vary with the type and age of the bean). Wait until the end of the cooking time to add salt or acidic ingredients, such as tomatoes, vinegar or molasses; these ingredients prevent the beans from softening.
- **Slow-Cooker Method:** Place the drained, soaked beans in a slow cooker and pour in 5 cups boiling water. Cover and cook on high until tender, 2 to 3½ hours. Add salt, if using, and cook 15 minutes more.

### EQUIVALENTS

A pound of dried beans (about 2 cups) will yield 5 to 6 cups cooked beans.

One 19-ounce can holds about 2 cups cooked beans; a 15-ounce can, about 1½ cups.

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## STORAGE

If you cook up a big batch of beans from scratch or have leftover canned beans, you have a couple of options. Drain and refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days. Or freeze them in 1½ cup-portions (about the amount in a 15-ounce can) in airtight containers for up to 6 months.

## QUICK IDEAS FOR BEANS

**Black Bean Dip** is a great snack to have on hand. Combine one 19-ounce *or* 15-ounce can rinsed black beans, ½ cup prepared salsa, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro and ¼ teaspoon ground cumin in a food processor. Process until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. *Makes 1½ cups.*

**Tomato, White Bean & Escarole Sauce** is a hearty topping for pasta or polenta. Heat 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add 3 cloves finely chopped garlic and stir until golden, about 30 seconds. Add 1½ cups marinara sauce, 3 cups coarsely chopped escarole, one 15-ounce can rinsed great northern *or* cannellini beans and ⅓ cup dry white wine. Bring to a simmer and cook for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper. *Makes 4 servings, generous ¾ cup each.*

## RECIPES

Check the Price Chopper Recipe Cards Rack, or go to [www.pricechopper.com](http://www.pricechopper.com).

**BAKED COD WITH CHORIZO & WHITE BEANS**

**BEAN & TOMATO SALAD WITH HONEY VINAIGRETTE**

**BEEF & BEAN CHILE VERDE**

**EASY CHICKEN BURRITOS**

**GREEK DINER SALAD**

**ROASTED CORN, BLACK BEAN & MANGO SALAD**

**SHRIMP ENCHILADAS VERDE**

**SLOW-COOKED BEANS**

**TUSCAN CHICKEN & WHITE BEAN SOUP**

**VEGETABLE & SAUSAGE SKILLET SUPPER**



Tuscan Chicken & White Bean Soup



Slow-Cooked Beans

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