



Bean Basics: A Toolkit on How to Use Beans

Beans are a versatile food that can be used in many ways. They are packed with important nutrients that help to maintain good health. Beans are an excellent staple ingredient to add to any pantry and they provide a splash of color, flavor, and texture to all types of meals. Beans come in many different shapes and sizes and can be a healthy addition to your diet.

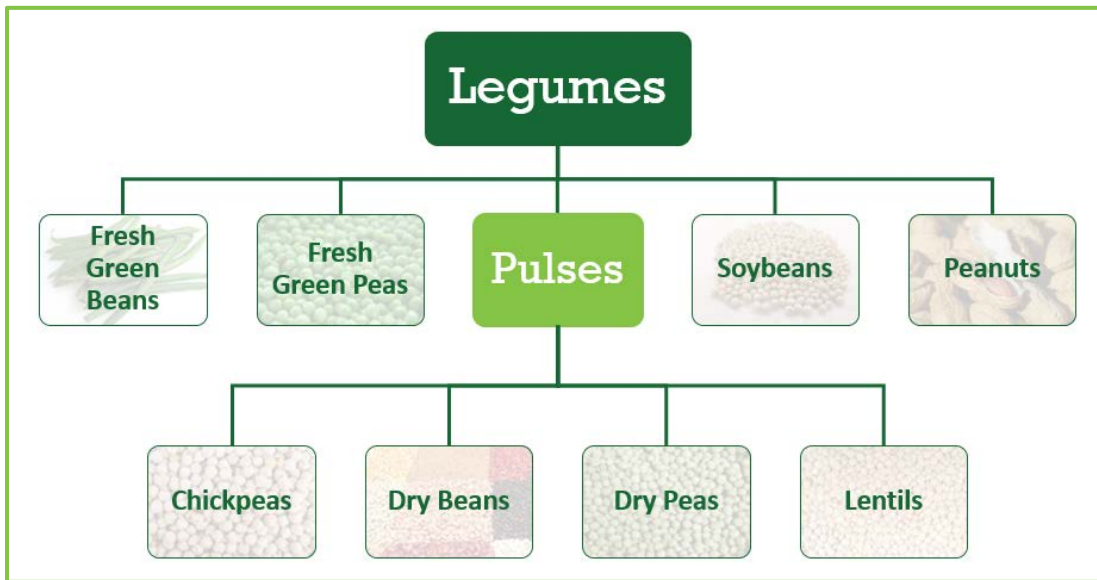
This toolkit will provide an overview of everything you may want to know about beans! You will learn about the difference between canned and dry beans, discover new cooking techniques, and find ideas to add beans to traditional recipes. There are also new, interesting recipes that use beans if you want to get creative!

This toolkit can be printed as one document or you can print select pages based on your interest and need. A table of contents is below to help you find the information you need.

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What are Beans?

Beans are edible seeds that are part of a larger family of crops called legumes. Legumes are plants that grow in pods. They are a good source of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals and they are naturally low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Legumes are found in the [MyPlate](#) Protein **and** Vegetable food groups.



What are Pulses?

Pulses are a type of legume. Pulses are the **dry, edible** seeds inside of the pods. Unlike other legumes, pulses are harvested when they are dry instead of when they are green. There are 11 different types of pulses. The most common types are:

- **Dry Beans:** Fresh beans and soybeans are not pulses. Some examples of dry beans are black beans, navy beans, kidney beans, lima beans, mung beans, pinto beans, and great northern beans.
- **Chickpeas:** Chickpeas are also called garbanzo beans. Chickpeas also come in two different sizes, Desi (smaller) and Kabuli (bigger).
- **Dry Peas:** Fresh peas are not pulses, but dry peas are considered pulses. Some varieties of dry peas are black-eyed peas, split yellow or green peas, and whole yellow or green peas.
- **Lentils:** Lentils are usually smaller and flatter in shape than dry beans. There are a variety of different lentils. Some examples are green, red, and brown.

While knowing the difference between legumes and pulses is important, this toolkit will mostly refer to all legumes and pulses as “beans.”



The Nutrition Benefits of Beans

Beans, lentils, and chickpeas are packed with nutrients that are important for maintaining a healthy diet that can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. Check out the nutritional benefits of adding beans to your next meal!

Protein

Proteins are the building blocks for many parts of our body including our organs, muscles, hair, nails, and skin. Beans are found in the MyPlate protein group and are classified as a plant-based protein. They contain a similar amount of protein per serving as other foods in the MyPlate protein group such as meat, poultry, and fish. People who limit the amount of meat, poultry, and fish they consume, such as vegetarians and vegans, may use beans as a major source of protein in their diet.

Fat

Beans are naturally low in fat and because they are a plant-based protein, they do not have any cholesterol or trans fat. Fat provides more than double the amount of calories per gram than protein, so eating beans in place of other foods high in fat may help to reduce the amount of calories eaten overall.

Fiber

Fiber is found in all foods that come from plants, including beans, peas, and lentils. The body is not able to digest or absorb fiber to the same way as protein, carbohydrates, and fat. Fiber is found in two forms: soluble fiber and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber breaks down in water to create a gel-like material that may help to lower cholesterol and blood glucose levels. Beans, oats, fruits, and vegetables all have soluble fiber. Insoluble fiber does not break down in water but instead promotes digestion by increasing the movement of “bulk waste” out of the body’s digestive system. Insoluble fiber helps to reduce constipation and is found in beans as well as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole-grain products. Foods that are high in fiber, like beans, also make you feel full for a longer time.

Vitamins and Minerals

Beans are rich in many vitamins and minerals such as B vitamins, potassium, iron, and magnesium. B Vitamins such as folic acid, riboflavin and Vitamin B6 are important for maintaining normal cell growth and energy production. Potassium helps maintain a healthy blood pressure and iron is necessary for carrying oxygen to the cells in your body. Magnesium is needed for many functions in the body and can help to regulate nerve function, blood sugar levels, and making protein, bone, and DNA.

Beans pack a powerful punch and are filled with nutrients that are important for maintaining proper growth and development. Reach for beans the next time you want to add a nutrient powerhouse to your next meal!



Types of Beans Offered Through USDA Foods

USDA offers various types of beans as regular offerings in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Other types of beans and peas may be offered on occasion through TEFAP through a special purchase program to support farmers. The differences between canned and dry varieties may impact how you use beans. Below are the options offered through USDA Foods and things to consider when using beans in your meals.

| | CSFP | FDPIR | TEFAP |
|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Baby lima beans, dry | X | | X |
| Black beans, canned | X | X | X |
| Black-eyed peas, canned | | | X |
| Black-eyed peas, dry | | | X |
| Garbanzo beans, canned | | | X |
| Great Northern beans, dry | X | X | X |
| Kidney beans, canned | X | X | X |
| Kidney beans, dry | X | | X |
| Lentils, dry | X | | X |
| Pinto beans, canned | X | X | X |
| Pinto beans, dry | X | X | X |
| Refried beans, canned | | X | X |
| Vegetarian beans, canned | X | X | X |

| Canned Beans and Chickpeas | Dry Beans and Lentils |
|--|--|
| Canned beans and chickpeas have been blanched (briefly boiled), packed in liquid, and then cooked at high heat under steam pressure. | Dry beans and lentils are harvested from the field and left to dry out. The beans are then collected from their pods, cleaned off, and packaged. |
| Preparation | |
| Canned beans and chickpeas are pre-cooked, which means they save time during cooking. They only need to be drained and rinsed before adding to a meal. | Dry beans and lentils are not cooked. They need to be cleaned to remove any stones or broken beans. Most dry beans need to be soaked before they are cooked, but dry lentils are small and do not need to be soaked before cooking. See page 5 to learn more about soaking dry beans. |
| Storage | |
| Canned beans and chickpeas can be stored for more than a year at room temperature. Always check the best if used by date before eating. | Dry beans and lentils can be stored at room temperature for up to one year. After a year, they may become tough and can take longer to cook. Always check the best if used by date before eating. |
| Flavor and Texture | |
| Canned beans and chickpeas may be packed in a liquid that contains sodium, but all USDA Foods canned beans and chickpeas are low-sodium. Consumers can drain and rinse the beans before using to lower the sodium. USDA Foods Vegetarian beans and Refried beans have been formulated to include additional spices and flavors, but they are still low-sodium. | Dry beans and lentils are a no salt added product, which offers consumers more control over how much salt is added during cooking. Dry beans also offer flexibility in the cooking time to better control the texture of the cooked beans. |



Cooking With Beans: Soaking Dry Beans

Whether you are using canned or dry beans, cooking with beans can be simple! Beans can be added to soups, stews, salads, dips, and even dessert. Dry beans are not cooked and need to be cleaned and soaked before adding to a recipe, while canned beans can be used immediately (see page 4 for more information). Read below to learn more about how to soak dry beans for cooking.

Why Should I Soak My Dry Beans?

1. Reduce Cooking Time

Soaked beans cook faster. As beans soak, they absorb water. The water inside the beans helps the inside and outside of the bean to be evenly cooked. Soaked beans are more likely to hold their shapes because they do not need to be cooked as long as beans that were not soaked.

2. Reduce Digestive Issues

Beans contain fibers known as oligosaccharides. Our bodies do not easily digest oligosaccharides which may cause digestive issues such as gas and bloating. As you soak your beans, some oligosaccharides are released into the water making them less likely to cause gas.

Which Beans Should I Soak?

- All dry beans and chickpeas should be soaked before cooking.
- Dry peas and lentils are smaller so they do **NOT** need to be soaked before cooking.
- Canned beans, peas, and lentils do **NOT** need to be soaked before cooking.

How Should I Soak My Beans?

| Soaking Methods | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
| | Hot Soak* | Quick Soak* | Traditional Soak* |
| | <i>Recommended</i> | <i>Fastest</i> | <i>Easiest</i> |
| Step 1 | Place beans in a large pot and add 10 cups of water for every 2 cups of dry beans. | Place beans in a large pot and add 6 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans. | Place the beans in a large pot and add enough water to cover the beans. |
| Step 2 | Heat to boiling and boil for an additional 2-3 minutes. | Heat to boiling and boil for an additional 2-3 minutes. | Soak for 8 hours or overnight. |
| Step 3 | Remove beans from heat, cover and let stand for 4-24 hours . | Remove beans from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour . | |
| Step 4 | Drain beans and discard soaking water. | Drain beans and discard soaking water. | Drain beans and discard soaking water. |
| Step 5 | Rinse beans with fresh, cool water before cooking. | Rinse beans with fresh, cool water before cooking. | Rinse beans with fresh, cool water before cooking. |

* Beans will absorb water while soaking, so be sure to use a large pot with plenty of extra room to allow them to expand.



Cooking with Beans: Techniques and Methods

Beans are versatile and can be used in many types of recipes including soups, stews, salads, dips, and even desserts! There are several basic cooking techniques and methods that are simple and can be used to prepare beans for your next meal.

Boiling

This technique is best for dry beans and lentils. After soaking dry beans (see page 5), or rinsing lentils, they can be put in a large pot with water over medium-high heat. When the beans or lentils come to a boil, cover the pan and lower the heat. Check out the cooking times in the table to the right for the dry beans and lentils offered through USDA Foods. Cooking times show the amount of time that is needed to cook the beans after they have been soaked.

| Type of Dry Bean/Lentils | Cooking Time |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Baby lima beans | 90 – 120 minutes |
| Black-eyed peas | 60 – 90 minutes |
| Great Northern beans | 45 – 60 minutes |
| Kidney beans | 90 – 120 minutes |
| Lentils | 20 – 30 minutes |
| Pinto beans | 90 – 120 minutes |

Heating/Warming

Canned beans: Since canned beans and chickpeas are already cooked, they can be used straight from the can. Heat/warm canned beans and chickpeas in a saucepan over medium-low heat until warm. Remove from heat and use as desired.

Tips: Remember to drain any excess liquid before adding to a recipe. If using in a cold recipe, such as a salad, canned beans and chickpeas do not need to be heated or warmed.

Dry beans and lentils: Dry beans and lentils need to be fully cooked before they can be heated or warmed. Once they are fully cooked, they can be stored in a sealed container in the refrigerator. When they are ready to be used, put fully cooked dry beans and lentils in a saucepan and heat until warm.

Mashing

This technique is great for adding beans to a dip or dessert. Mash cooked dry beans or canned beans in a bowl with a fork or potato masher to the desired consistency. Beans can also be pureed in a blender for a smoother texture. Just add a little liquid such as oil, the liquid from the canned beans, or water to help with the process.

Roasting

This is a great method if you want to add even more flavor to your meals. Rinse and drain canned beans or cooked dry beans. Spray a sheet pan with cooking spray and spread the drained beans, lentils, or chickpeas evenly across the pan. Spray the beans with cooking spray or mix with a tablespoon of your favorite cooking oil. Sprinkle your favorite seasonings on top of the beans and bake in the oven for 45 minutes at 350 degrees F until crispy. Toss the beans every 15-20 to make sure the beans are evenly roasted. They can be added to a salad to replace croutons or eaten as a snack!

Tips: Remove as much liquid as possible from the beans before roasting them in the oven. Dry beans must be cooked and chilled before they can be roasted in the oven.



Cooking with Beans: Using Beans in Everyday Recipes

Beans come in many different shapes, sizes, forms, and flavors. Beans are more popular in certain cuisines than in others, but they can be included in a variety of recipes you may already prepare at home. This handout will provide an overview of how beans can fit into meals you may already be familiar with.

When cooking with beans, it is important to have a sense of how much you will need for a specific recipe. Dry beans and lentils expand when they cook, so there are more servings per cup than canned beans. Canned beans are already cooked and packed in liquid, which usually needs to be drained before using. Read the recipe carefully to find out how many cups of beans you need and adjust as needed for dry or canned beans. The chart below provides an overview of the approximate yield of beans in various forms:

| Form | Yield |
|------------------------------|---|
| Dry beans, one pound | = 2 cups dry beans |
| Dry beans, one pound | = 6 cups cooked beans, drained |
| Dry beans, one cup | = 3 cups cooked beans, drained |
| Cooked beans, drained, ½ cup | = 1 serving (based on MyPlate recommendations) |
| Canned beans, 15 ounces | = 1.75 cups, drained |
| Canned beans, 15 ounces | = 3.5 servings (based on MyPlate recommendations) |

Soups and Stews

Soups and stews are some of the easiest ways to add more beans to your diet. Great northern beans have a mild taste and can be added to a homemade chicken vegetable soup. Kidney beans have a firm texture and they add a pop of color to any stew or chili. While both dry beans and canned beans can be used, dry beans will need to be soaked before adding to a soup or stew (page 5). Need a new soup idea? Try out the Chickpea Corn Chowder (page 14) or the Three-Bean Minestrone (page 18).

Salads

Add more protein to your salad by using beans! Give your salad a southwest flair by using black beans with corn, peppers, and tortilla strips. Chickpeas can give your salad a Mediterranean feel along with olives, red onions, and romaine lettuce. Roast beans to add a nice crunch to your next salad. Don't have leafy greens to make a salad? Try the Marinated Three Bean Salad recipe (page 17)!

Dips

Dips are great as an appetizer at a party or as a quick snack with your lunch. Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, can be used to make hummus, a traditional Mediterranean dip. Dip cut-up vegetables like carrots or celery into hummus for a protein-packed snack. Pinto beans and black beans also make great dips. Pureed or mashed pinto or black beans make a great refried bean dip or spread for a quesadilla or 7-layer dip. These bean dips can also be used in place of other condiments on a sandwich. Spread hummus or another bean mash on your sandwich to add more protein and fiber!

Desserts

Believe it or not, beans can be used for dessert too! Some beans like black beans, lentils, and Great Northern beans have a mild flavor. This means when used in recipes, they take on the flavor of other ingredients that have a stronger flavor profile. Add mashed cooked black beans or lentils to your brownie recipe or add them to your morning smoothie for a natural boost of protein.

Cooking With Beans: Getting Creative with Beans

Beans are commonly found in soups, stews, salads, and dips. Their mild flavors make them such a versatile ingredient that they can be added to recipes you may have never even thought about. If you want to try something new and get creative with beans, try adding them to your breakfast, sandwiches, and desserts. Below are a few creative ways to use beans:

Beans for Breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Adding foods high in protein such as beans will help you get the nutrients you need to power through your day. Try some of these simple tips to add beans to your breakfast:

- **Oatmeal:** Cook lentils with oatmeal to make a filling breakfast. Both oats and beans are loaded with fiber to help you feel fuller longer. Top it with fruit to add more nutrients and a little bit of sweetness.
- **Eggs and Beans:** Eggs are an excellent source of protein. Add a ¼ cup of cooked pinto or black beans to an omelet for a protein-packed breakfast.
- **Pancakes:** Mash cooked beans into your pancake batter to add some protein and fiber to a classic breakfast.
- **Quesadillas & Burritos:** Add any type of bean to a breakfast burrito or quesadilla. After adding beans, fill the burrito or quesadilla with low-fat cheese and veggies for an easy, on-the-go breakfast option.
- **Smoothies:** Blend cooked beans with fruits and vegetables for a healthy breakfast smoothie filled with vitamins and minerals.
- **Baked Goods:** Bake cooked, mashed beans into a breakfast bread or breakfast muffins for a hearty morning grain. Try adding ½ cup of mashed great northern beans to banana bread or ½ cup of mashed black beans to blueberry muffins. Baking uses exact measures, therefore, you may need to experiment by altering other ingredients to get the desired product.

Beans for a Snack

Healthy snacks can fill you up until your next meal. Try some of these simple tips to add beans to your snacks:

- **Chocolate Bean Bark:** Canned beans or chickpeas can be coated in melted chocolate and put into the freezer to set. After the chocolate sets, pieces can be broken off for crunchy, chocolate bark snacks.
- **Snack Mix:** Trail mix or snack mix is usually full of nuts, dried fruit, seeds, and pretzels. Add some roasted beans for an extra boost of folate, iron, and potassium.
- **Salsa:** Salsa and chips are a party favorite. Add cooked beans to salsa for a quick, hearty, satisfying dip.
- **Seasoned:** On their own, canned beans and dried peas can be seasoned and roasted to make an easy, low fat, crunchy snack. You can use salt and pepper, dried herbs, cheese, maple syrup, or even spicy pepper flakes to customize your beans any way you like!



Breakfast Recipes



Cocoa Bean Smoothie

Serves: 1

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 ripe banana, peeled
- ½ cup canned black beans, rinsed
- 1/3 cup low-fat milk
- 2 tsp honey
- 3 ice cubes

Directions:

1. Put all ingredients in a blender and mix well for 1-2 minutes.
2. Serve chilled.

Recipe adapted from Edamam (www.Edamam.com).



Crispy Split Pea Avocado Toast

Serves: 1

Ingredients:

- ½ cup dried green split peas
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 piece whole wheat bread
- 1 avocado
- 1/8 tsp red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper (to taste)

Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, cover the split peas with water. Let them soak for at least 2 hours before making the avocado toast.
2. After the split peas have soaked, heat the oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Drain the split peas and add them to the preheated pan. Cook until crispy, about 3-5 minutes.
4. While the split peas are cooking, toast the bread and scoop out the avocado. Mash the avocado in a small bowl and stir in the red pepper flakes and salt and pepper to taste.
5. Stir half of the split pea mixture into the avocado mixture.
6. Spread on the toast and top with the remaining split peas.

Recipe adapted from Pulses (www.pulses.org).



Southwest Black Bean and Egg Muffins

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fillings
 - any cooked vegetables
 - cooked black beans
- 1/2 cup cheese
- Salt and pepper
- 12 eggs

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray the muffin tin with cooking spray.
2. Whisk the eggs until combined. Season with salt and pepper. Stir the fillings into the eggs.
3. Divide evenly among the muffin tin. You can also fill the bottoms of the muffin tins with the fillings and pour the eggs over top.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes until cooked through.
5. Wait 5-10 minutes before removing them from the tin.

Recipe adapted from Simply Recipes (www.simplyrecipes.com).



Soup and Salad Recipes



Chickpea Corn Chowder

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 medium onion
- 1 medium potato
- ¾ cups milk or half and half
- 2 cans (15.5 oz) chickpeas
- 1 tbsp butter (unsalted)
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 3 cups corn (fresh, canned, or frozen)

Directions:

1. Drain and rinse the chickpeas.
2. Mince the garlic and chop the onion. Dice the potato into small cubes.
3. In a large pot, combine the oil and butter over medium heat. Once the butter has melted, add the garlic and the onion. Cook until the onion is tender and almost clear.
4. Add salt and pepper.
5. Add the potatoes and broth. Bring to a boil, lower heat, cover pot, and let simmer for 10-15 minutes until the potatoes can be easily pierced by a fork.
6. Add the milk, corn, and chickpeas. Return to a boil, and then lower to a simmer. Cook on low heat for 5-10 minutes until the chickpeas are warmed throughout. (If using frozen corn, heat until corn is cooked).
7. Season with additional salt and pepper, as needed.

Recipe adapted from The Little Epicurean (www.thelittleepicurean.com).



Hearty Lima Bean Soup

Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups chicken broth, low-sodium
- 2 cups chicken or turkey (cooked, diced, boned)
- 2 cups tomatoes, canned
- 2 cups lima beans, cooked
- 2 cups whole kernel corn, canned

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large pan. Add onion and cook in oil until tender.
2. Add all remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer for 30 minutes at medium-low heat.

Recipe adapted from Virginia Cooperative Extension, SNAP-Ed.



Split Pea Soup

Serves: 5

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 2 ¼ cup slit peas, rinsed, sorted
- 4 cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 6 cup water
- 1/8 cup lemon juice

Directions:

1. Heat oil in large pot over medium heat.
2. Add onion, carrots, celery, and thyme and cook 10-15 minutes, until tender.
3. Add split peas, broth, and 4 cups of water. Raise the heat to high and bring to a boil.
4. Lower the heat to low and cook about 2 hours, partially covered, until the peas have fallen apart. Check the soup during cooking and add more water as needed.
5. Stir in the lemon juice just before serving.

Recipe adapted from USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.



Three Bean Minestrone

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons oil
- 6 garlic cloves
- 1 large yellow onion
- 3 stalks celery
- 2 large carrots
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 8 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 (15.5 oz) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (15.5 oz) can chickpeas
- 1 (15.5 oz) can white kidney beans
- 1 (15.5 oz) can red kidney beans
- 1 ½ cups pasta (uncooked)
- 2 medium zucchini

Directions:

1. Rinse and drain all the beans.
2. Chop the onion, celery, zucchinis, and carrots. Separate the zucchini. Chop the garlic.
3. Cook the pasta according to directions on the package. Drain and toss with 1 tablespoon of olive oil to prevent pasta from sticking.
4. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large saucepan on high. Add the garlic. Cook until golden.
5. Lower the heat to medium. Add the carrots, celery, and onion. Cook until soft, stirring often, about 10 minutes.
6. Raise the heat to high. Add the beans, chickpeas, tomatoes, and zucchini. Add the chicken stock and bring to a boil.
7. Lower the heat, and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Skim foam from the top.
8. Add salt and pepper. Add cooked pasta.

Recipe adapted from *Simply Recipes* (www.simplyrecipes.com).



Marinated Three Bean Salad

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 cup lima beans, cooked, drained
- 1 cup red kidney beans, cooked, drained
- 1 cup green beans, cooked, drained
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
- ½ cup green bell pepper, chopped
- 8 oz fat-free Italian salad dressing

Directions:

1. Cook and cool all of the beans. Slice green beans into 1-inch pieces.
2. Peel and slice the onion, and then separate into rings.
3. Remove the stem from the green pepper, and chop into small, bite-size pieces.
4. In a large bowl, combine the lima beans, kidney beans, green beans, sliced onion rings, and green pepper.
5. Pour the dressing over the vegetables and toss lightly.
6. Cover the bowl and marinate in the refrigerator for at least one hour. You can leave the salad in the refrigerator overnight.
7. Serve chilled.

Recipe adapted from Perdue Extension FoodLink.



Entrees



Black-Eyed Pea Casserole

Serves: 10 – 12

Ingredients:

- 1 cup brown rice or wild rice
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 2 cans (15.5 oz) black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (10.75 oz) condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded

Directions:

1. In a large, cook the rice according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook the turkey, onions and green peppers over medium heat until the meat is no longer pink. Drain the excess liquid.
2. In a large bowl, combine the black-eyed peas, soup, rice, and turkey mixture. Transfer to a greased 2 ½ quart baking dish.
3. Cover and bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until heated through. Uncover and sprinkle with cheese. Bake 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted.

Recipe adapted from Taste of Home (www.tasteofhome.com).



Red Bean Quesadilla

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 8-inch whole wheat tortilla
- 1 cup frozen spinach (thawed and squeezed to remove excess liquid)
- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese
- 1 avocado, peeled, pitted, chopped
- 1 can (15.5 oz) low-sodium red kidney beans, drained, rinsed
- garlic powder or dry herbs (optional)

Directions:

1. Using a fork, mash beans in a bowl until slightly chunky. Add no-salt seasonings such as garlic powder and dried or fresh herbs, if desired.
2. Place 1 tortilla on a plate and top with half the mashed beans.
3. Top the beans with ½ cup of the spinach.
4. Top the spinach with half the cheese.
5. Top the cheese with half the avocado, (optional).
6. Put the other tortilla on top of the avocado, gently pressing it down so the top half sticks.
7. Repeat with the remaining 2 tortillas.
8. Place a nonstick skillet on the stove over medium and heat until warm, then place 1 quesadilla in the dry skillet. Cook until golden brown, about 1–2 minutes on each side. (Or put the plate in the microwave and heat until the cheese melts, about 45 seconds.)
9. Repeat with the remaining quesadilla.
10. Cut each quesadilla into quarters. Serve warm.

Recipe adapted from USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.



Lentil Shepherds Pie

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons butter (unsalted)
- 1 ½ cups dried lentils
- 1 cup of frozen mixed vegetables
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Rinse and drain the lentils. Set aside for later.
3. Chop the sweet potatoes into 1-inch pieces.
4. Boil 2 cups of water, and add the sweet potatoes. Cook until they are easily pierced with a fork, about 20 minutes.
5. Drain the water and use a fork to mash the sweet potatoes. When they are almost completely mashed, add the butter and a little salt and pepper. Continue mashing until the sweet potatoes are smooth.
6. In a saucepan, combine the lentils, frozen vegetables, and broth. Cover and cook for 20 minutes until the lentils are cooked and half of the stock is left.
7. Add 2 tablespoons of mashed sweet potato to the pot and stir.
8. Grease a baking pan and spoon the lentil mixture in.
9. Spread the potatoes over the top to cover the lentils.
10. Bake for 20 minutes.

Recipe adapted from *Pulses* (www.pulses.org).



Vegan Burrito Bowl

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 6 cups of brown rice
- 1 can (15.5 oz) black beans
- 1 can (15.5 oz) corn
- ½ cup red onion
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 3 tablespoons cilantro, chopped (optional)
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 avocado
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup lettuce

Directions:

1. Drain and rinse the beans and corn.
2. Dice the red onion. Slice the avocado and shred the lettuce.
3. Chop the cilantro. Separate into 2 tablespoons and 1 tablespoon.
4. Prepare the rice, and divide between four bowls.
5. In a large bowl, combine the black beans, corn, red onion, lime juice, 2 tablespoons cilantro, pepper, cumin, and salt.
6. Divide this mixture between the four bowls on top of the rice.
7. Top the bowls with the avocado, pico de gallo or salsa, lettuce, and the remaining 1 tablespoon of cilantro.

Recipe adapted from *Simply Recipes* (www.simplyrecipes.com).



White Chicken Chili

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoon oil
- 2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper, black
- 1 can (4 oz) green chilies, drained, diced
- 2 teaspoon cumin, ground
- 3 cups great northern beans, cooked
- 1 1/2 cup chicken (cooked, cubed)
- 1 can chicken broth (14.5 oz can)
- 1/2 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil. Add onion and cook until tender
2. Add green chilies, beans (do not drain), chicken broth, garlic powder, pepper, ground cumin, and chicken. Bring to a boil
3. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until desired thickness
4. Serve hot, topped with cheese.

Recipe adapted from Nebraska Nutrition Education Program Nebraska SNAP-Ed.



Dessert Recipes



Chickpea Bark

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups canned, drained chickpeas
- 1 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon oil
- Oil spray (as needed)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Line a baking tray with waxed paper and lightly grease with preferred oil or use an oil spray.
3. Add chickpeas to tray and drizzle with preferred oil.
4. Roast in the oven for 25 minutes or until crunchy.
5. Let cool on the tray.
6. In a microwave-safe bowl, add dark chocolate chips and coconut oil.
7. Microwave for 30 seconds, stir then microwave again. Repeat until the chocolate melts.
8. In a large bowl, combine the roasted chickpeas and dark chocolate then pour onto a lined baking tray.
9. Place in the freezer to set for 20-30 minutes.

Recipe adapted from Pulses (www.pulses.org).



Lentil Brownies

Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs
- 2 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cup flour
- 1 cup of chocolate chips
- ½ cup large dried lentils (Do not soak)
- 1 cup small marshmallows

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Rinse the lentils. Then, in a large pot, simmer the lentils in 1½ cups of water for 5-20 minutes until tender. Then continue to boil them for another 40 minutes. Drain the lentils and set aside for later.
3. In a large bowl, beat the eggs and sugar until well mixed.
4. Add in the oil and vanilla and stir well.
5. In a different bowl, sift the sugar, cocoa, flour, and salt. Add to the sugar and egg mixture. Stir well.
6. Stir in the chocolate chips, cooked lentils, and marshmallows.
7. Bake in a greased pan for 35 minutes.

Recipe adapted from Pulses (www.pulses.org).