



A nutrition Fact Sheet



Cooking Beans

There are many benefits to cooking dried beans, as opposed to using canned beans:

- Dried beans cost less per pound.
- You can control the amount of sodium in your beans.
- Dried beans don't have any preservatives.

On a day when you have a couple of hours to be at home, it is helpful to cook a batch (or two, for variety) of beans, and keep them in a covered container in the refrigerator (for up to 3 days) or in 1- to 2-cup packages in the freezer.

Do not add salt to the beans after cooking. When adding beans to recipes that call for canned beans, you may need to add a little salt. Start with a very small amount, taste the recipe, and if it needs more salt, add up to ½ teaspoon to taste. When using recipes from the *Buy Eat Live Better* website, just use the amount of salt specified. These recipes are designed to use home-cooked dried beans.

Step One: Clean and Soak

Why? Soaking beans helps you digest them better, and also cuts down dramatically on the cooking time!

1. Measure out the amount of beans you want to cook. (Keep in mind 1 cup of dried beans yields about 3 cups of cooked beans.)
2. Lay out the beans (i.e., in a long, flat Tupperware container) and pick out any rocks, stones, or dried, withered, or discolored beans.
3. Add three times the amount of cold water as you measured for your beans. For instance, for 1 cup of beans, add 3 cups of water.
4. Cover and let sit in the refrigerator overnight, or at least 8 hours.
5. After the allotted time, drain and rinse the beans.

Step Two: Cook

1. After draining and rinsing the soaked beans, add the beans to a large stock pot and again, add three times the amount of water as the amount of beans you measured out.
 - Do *not* add salt or cook the beans in broth. *Why?* Salt stops or drastically slows down the cooking process. If you add salt, your beans may never soften, no matter how long you cook them.
 - Do not add acidic ingredients, such as vinegar, lemon or lime juice, or tomatoes. *Why?* The same reason you would not add salt.
2. Bring to a rapid boil first, then reduce the heat to a simmer (a slow, gentle boil), cover with a lid, and let cook for at least 45 minutes.
3. Beans will be done when you can easily smash one between your fingers. (Test a few beans). Beans vary greatly in their cooking time, depending on the variety, age, size, and the altitude at which you are cooking. If they are not done after 45 minutes, set the timer for increments of 10-15 minutes to check on them. Beans can take up to an hour and a half to cook!

Step Three: Use or Store

If you will be using them right away, drain the beans in a colander and use the beans as intended.

If you plan to save the beans for later, drain the beans and place them in a shallow container with cold water to cool in the refrigerator. If you're not planning to use them within 2-3 days, drain the water and freeze in 1- to 2-cup packages.

Beans will keep in the refrigerator up to 3 days. For longer periods of time, store in the freezer.

