

# From the Food Bank Kitchen

## Beans—Healthy for Body and Budget

Information and chart sourced from NDSU Extension Service [www.NDSU.edu/eatsmart](http://www.NDSU.edu/eatsmart) and The Bean Institute <http://beaninstitute.com>.

Beans are very low in cost when compared to other high protein foods like chicken or pork, and are a great, easy-to-use protein option for many meals or side dishes. They can even be used in baked goods like black bean brownies! There are many different varieties of beans: chickpeas, kidney, cannellini, pinto, black eyed peas, and countless others. Beans can be used in canned or dried forms; see chart below with ways to prepare dried beans.

### Health Benefits of Beans

Beans, both dried and canned, provide protein, fiber, folate, iron, potassium, and magnesium while containing little to no fat. Consuming more beans can help improve overall health and reduce risk of diseases, including; heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and many types of cancers. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming at least 1½ cups of beans per week to take advantage of these potential health benefits.

### Dried Beans vs. Canned Beans (Note: lentils and split peas do not need to be soaked)

Beans are sold dried or canned. If purchasing canned beans, try to choose ones with “no salt added” on the label to reduce the amount of sodium. If you don’t have access to dried or unsalted options, rinse beans using a colander to reduce the sodium content by half. Check out these 3 ways to prepare dried beans to find your favorite.

#### Tips:

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

If a recipe calls for 1 cup dry beans, use 2 (15 oz) cans.

If a recipe calls for 1 (15 oz) can, soak and cook up ¾ cup of dry beans.

Traditional Soak	Hot Soak (preferred)	Quick Soak
1. Pour cold water over beans to cover.	1. Place beans in a large pot and add 10 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans.	1. Place beans in a large pot and add 6 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans.
2. Soak beans for eight hours or overnight.	2. Heat to boiling and boil for an additional two to three minutes.	2. Bring to boil and boil for an additional two to three minutes.
3. Drain beans and discard soak water.	3. Remove beans from heat, cover and let stand for four to 24 hours.	3. Remove beans from heat, cover and let stand for one hour.
4. Rinse beans with fresh, cool water.	4. Drain beans and discard soak water.	4. Drain beans and discard soak water.
	5. Rinse beans with fresh, cool water.	5. Rinse beans with fresh, cool water.
<b>Advantages:</b> No boiling required; reduces gas-producing compounds with long soak	<b>Advantages:</b> Reduces cooking time and gas-producing compounds; consistently yields tender beans	<b>Advantages:</b> Much faster soaking time, requiring less planning
<b>Disadvantages:</b> Long soaking time, requiring planning ahead of time	<b>Disadvantages:</b> Long soaking time, requiring some planning	<b>Disadvantages:</b> Fermentation may take place if left in hot water for too long; potential loss of some folate

### How to Reduce Stomach Discomfort from Beans

Some carbohydrates in beans and other legumes, like peanuts or peas, may lead to stomach discomfort or gas. Here are some tips to reduce the occurrence of gas and bloating:

- If you do not already eat a lot of beans, add beans to your diet slowly. For example, add 2-4 Tbsp per day and gradually increase the amount.
- Drink more water, the more legumes you consume.
- Use the hot soak method when preparing dried beans. The longer the beans soak, the more you will reduce the amount of the gas producing compounds.
- Change the water multiple times when soaking dried beans. Many of the gas-causing carbohydrates are released into the water beans are soaked in.
- Rinse canned beans (like kidney, black, pinto, cannellini or chickpeas) before eating or using in recipes.
- Consider taking a supplement (such as Beano or generic store equivalent) to help reduce your symptoms.

## Italian Bean Salad

Makes 8 servings

Adapted from: Northarvest Bean Growers Association

1 c dry spiral macaroni or other pasta shape  
1 small head fresh broccoli (or 1 c frozen broccoli florets),  
cut into bite-sized pieces  
2 carrots, peeled and diced  
1 tomato, diced

1 (15-16 oz) can ANY type of beans, drained and rinsed (or  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  c dry beans, soaked and cooked)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c reduced-calorie/"lite" Italian dressing  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c grated Parmesan cheese

**Directions:** Cook macaroni in large saucepan of water just until tender. Drain and rinse with cold water. In a large bowl, mix broccoli, carrots and tomato. Add the rest of the ingredients to vegetables and stir gently. Cover and chill. Before serving, stir salad; add additional dressing if necessary.

**Nutrition Facts:** *Calories 120, Fat 15 gm, Saturated Fat 1 gm, Sodium 90 mg, Carbohydrate 21 gm, Fiber 4 gm, Protein 7 gm*

## Microwave Black Bean Quesadillas

Serves 4

Source: USDA SNAP-Ed Connection

1 (15 oz) can beans (any variety), drained and rinsed  
4 eight-inch tortillas (wheat preferred)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup low fat shredded cheese  
**Optional Toppings:** salsa, chopped cilantro, sour cream

*Optional: sprinkle dried cumin over beans, or add a few  
tablespoons of canned spinach or thawed frozen spinach  
over the beans before sprinkling on the cheese*

**Directions:** Spoon a quarter of the beans onto one half of each of the tortillas. Top the beans with the shredded cheese and fold the tortilla in half. Microwave each tortilla on high for 1½ minutes, or until the cheese melts. Slice into wedges and add toppings as desired.

**Nutrition Facts:** *Calories 250, Fat 5 gm, Sat Fat 2 gm, Sodium 460 mg, Carbs 37 gm, Fiber 8 gm, Protein 15 gm*

## Red Beans and Rice

Serves 8

Adapted from Robert Irvine, Food Network

1 Tbsp olive oil  
2 large cloves garlic, lightly crushed and minced  
1 large red onion, diced (can substitute yellow onion)  
1 stalk celery, diced (optional)  
1 green bell pepper, stem and seeds removed, small diced  
2 (1 lb) cans red kidney or black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 tsp onion powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

$\frac{1}{4}$  tsp ground black pepper  
1 Tbsp hot sauce (optional; omit if preferred)  
 $2\frac{1}{2}$  c reduced sodium vegetable or chicken stock  
1 c white rice  
1 Tbsp butter  
1 Tbsp fresh cilantro leaves, minced (optional)

**Nutrition Facts:** *Calories 260, Fat 5 gm, Saturated Fat 2 gm,  
Sodium 490 mg, Carbohydrate 45 gm, Fiber 7 gm, Protein 11 gm*

**Directions:** Heat olive oil over medium high heat in a large saucepan. Sauté garlic, onion, celery, and bell pepper until tender. Stir in kidney beans, onion powder, salt, pepper, and hot sauce. Reduce heat to low and let mixture simmer slowly while you cook the rice. Bring the stock to a boil and stir in rice and butter. Return to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and cook for 20 minutes without removing the lid. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Fold rice and beans gently together and transfer to a serving dish. Top with chopped cilantro or shredded cheese if desired.

## Other Bean Ideas:

**Main Dishes:** Add beans to chili, burgers, or try the rice and bean recipe above for an entrée, and add in cooked leftover chicken or meat, ham, or sausage to increase protein and make it more filling. Try replacing meat in your favorite recipes with beans, for example, a black bean enchilada. There are many online recipes available to make veggie burgers from scratch using mashed black beans, chickpeas, lentils, and other beans. These make a delicious patty one can fry up on the stove, grill, or bake and enjoy in a bun along with a salad for a balanced and satisfying meal.

**Side Dishes:** Baked beans or a 3 bean salad adds fiber and nutrients to any meal.

**Salads:** Top a salad with raw chickpeas. Or spread chickpeas in a single layer on a baking pan with oil and spices (or just salt and pepper), and roast in a preheated 400°F oven for about 30-40 minutes until crispy and golden brown.

**Dips:** Bean dips make a great appetizer, or layer with salsa, sour cream, and guacamole for a taco inspired dip!