

Beans



Beans are easy to cook, tasty, and healthy. They provide complex carbohydrates for energy, as well as protein, fiber, and other nutrients. Serve beans in main dishes, such as soups, stews, and salads, or in side dishes.

Getting Started

First, decide if you want to use dried or canned beans. Dried beans take longer to cook than canned beans, which have been presoaked and precooked. If you choose canned beans, buy a type with no salt added and make sure the can is not dented, bloated, rusted, or leaking. Next, choose a variety of bean for the dish you are making.

How to Cook Dried Beans

1. Pour the beans into a colander and discard any pebbles or debris. Two (2) cups dried beans will make 4–5 cups cooked beans, depending on the type of bean you use.
2. Rinse the beans with cold water.
3. Pour the beans into the pot and add enough cold water to cover the beans by a few inches. Cover the pot with a lid. Soak the beans for at least 6 hours or overnight.
4. Drain the soaked beans in a colander.
5. Return the beans to the pot and add enough fresh water to fully cover the beans.
6. Bring the water to a boil over high heat. Turn the heat to low and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the beans become tender. The cooking time depends on the type of bean you use (see chart on next page).

Equipment

- Colander
- Large pot with lid
- Can opener (for canned beans)

Cooking Times for Dried Beans

Type of Bean	Cooking Time*
Black	60–90 minutes
Garbanzo (also known as chickpea)	90 minutes to 2 hours
Great northern	60–90 minutes
Kidney	60–90 minutes
Lima, baby	45–60 minutes
Lima, large	60 minutes
Navy or small white	60–90 minutes
Pinto	60–90 minutes
Red	60–90 minutes

*Check package for exact cooking times.

How to Cook Canned Beans

1. Open the can with the pull tab or a can opener.
2. Pour the beans into a colander to drain liquid. Rinse them well to remove extra salt.
3. Place beans in a saucepan and cover them with water. Warm over medium heat for 5–8 minutes. Or, place beans in a microwave-safe dish, cover, and microwave until heated through. You don't need to add water when microwaving beans.

Recipe Ideas

- **Bean Dip:** Mash 1 cup black or white beans and add 1 teaspoon finely minced garlic and salt and pepper to taste. Use as a dip or spread for crackers or sandwiches.
- **Black Bean Salad:** Toss 2 cups black beans with ¼ cup salsa or ¼ cup chopped mango and ¼ cup cooked corn kernels. Serves 4.
- **Hummus:** Drain and rinse a 15-ounce can of garbanzo beans. In a food processor, puree the beans with 1 clove garlic, ½ teaspoon ground cumin, ¼ teaspoon salt, 1 tablespoon olive oil or tahini (sesame paste), and lemon juice to taste. Enjoy the hummus with raw vegetable sticks or whole grain pita bread. Serves 8.
- **Beans and Rice:** Mix ½ cup cooked black beans with 1 cup cooked rice. Serves 2.
- **Soups and Stews:** Add your favorite beans to any broth-based soup or stew for a hearty meal.

