



How to Make Pinto Beans

Three Methods: [Soaking the Beans](#) [Stovetop Method](#) [Slow-Cooker Method](#)

When made right, pinto beans become tender and creamy after being cooked. Most people cook the beans on the stovetop, but pinto beans can also be prepared in a slow cooker. Pre-soaking the beans is advisable either way. Here's what you should know about making pinto beans.

Ingredients

Makes 6 cups

- 1/2 lb. dry pinto beans
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 oz. margarine (optional)
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper (optional)
- Water

Method
1

Soaking the Beans

- 1 Rinse and sort through the beans.** Pour the beans into a colander and rinse them with running water. Remove any debris that you spot before transferring the beans to a large pot or bowl
 - You only need to rinse the beans for 30 to 60 seconds. The main purpose of this rinse is to stir up and loosen any major pieces of debris.
 - Debris usually appears in the form of small stones. You do not have to examine the beans too carefully during this process, especially if you purchased them from a trusted source, but you should keep your eyes open for anything that looks out of place.

- 2 Cover the beans with water.** Fill the bowl of beans with plenty of water
 - It is essential that you use a large bowl so that the beans have plenty of room to expand.
 - As a general rule, you should cover the 1 lb (450 g) of pinto beans with at least 8 cups (2 l) of water.

- 3 Let soak overnight.** Cover the beans to prevent further debris from getting into the water and let sit overnight in a cool, dark area.
 - You can use a refrigerator, but a secluded corner of the kitchen counter will work just as well if not better.
 - Soaking the beans softens them, thereby creating a shorter cooking time while preserving as many nutrients as possible. The process also helps clean them and removes indigestible, gas-creating sugars known as oligosaccharides

- 4 Dump the water and rinse the beans again.** Pour the beans through a colander and rinse with running water to remove any traces of dirt or oligosaccharides.
 - The dirt and oligosaccharides will have seeped into the water the beans soaked in, making it unsuitable for use as a cooking liquid. Rinsing the beans also makes them cleaner and safer to eat.
 - If you plan on reusing the pot you soaked the beans in to cook the beans, give the pot a quick rinse, as well.

**Method
2****Stovetop Method**

- 1 Fill the pot of beans with 2 quarts (2 l) of water.** Put the beans in a large stockpot or Dutch oven and cover them with at least 2 quarts (2 l) of cool tap water.
 - The water level should be high enough to cover the beans completely. If you suspect that more water is needed, you can add up to an additional 2 quarts
 - To cut the cooking time down by 15 to 30 minutes, add 1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) of baking soda to the cooking water. Stir gently to dissolve it
- 2 Bring the water to boil before reducing the heat.** Cook the beans on medium-high heat long enough for the water to begin boiling. Reduce the heat to medium or medium-low so that the water just barely simmers. Cover and cook for 30 minutes
- 3 Add the margarine, salt, black pepper, and crushed red pepper.** Give the ingredients a slight mix to incorporate them into the beans. Then, cover and simmer the beans for another 45 to 60 minutes
 - You could also use 1/4 cup (60 ml) of bacon grease instead of the margarine.
 - If you were to add bacon or salt pork, you would add it now and do so in place of the margarine.
 - The red pepper is only optional, but it does add a hint of kick and flavor to otherwise plain beans.
 - For best results, add the salt during this second round of cooking rather than during the first round. Adding the salt too early could toughen the beans.
- 4 Test the beans for tenderness.** Use a fork to test one bean, checking to see if it is tender and cooked through. If so, they are ready to serve.
 - Cooked beans are also quite fragrant.
 - If the beans are not finished cooking, you can continue letting them simmer for up to 30 more minutes, checking after each period of 10 minutes to determine if the beans are tender yet.

**Method
3****Slow-Cooker Method**

- 1 Combine all ingredients in a slow cooker.** Add the pinto beans, salt, black pepper, and red pepper to the slow cooker. Pour 7 1/2 cups (1875 ml) water over the ingredients and stir to combine
 - Slow cooking the beans is less traditional, but it will result in beans that are more tender and creamier.
 - The red pepper is only optional, but adding it does provide the pinto beans with a nice kick.
 - If desired, you could also add margarine to beans for a touch of added creaminess, but the pinto beans will end up being creamy even without the margarine.
 - You can grease the slow cooker with butter or cooking spray before cooking the beans to make your clean-up easier later on. Similarly, you could also use specially-designed slow cooker liners to prevent the pinto beans from sticking.
- 2 Cover and cook on low.** The beans should cook for 7 to 9 hours
 - Do not open the slow cooker as the beans cook. If you do, valuable steam will escape and you may need to add an additional 30 minutes onto the cooking time.
 - The total time largely depends on the size and age of the pinto beans you use.
 - When done, the beans should appear tender but they should not be falling apart. You can test your beans after the 7-hour mark with a fork to determine how tender they are.
- 3 Let the beans sit for 10 to 20 more minutes.** After the beans finish cooking, turn the slow cooker off and let the beans sit until they can absorb more of the liquid.

- By letting the beans sit, they will absorb more liquid and become creamier
- Leave the lid of the slow cooker on to help the beans stay warm

4 **Serve warm.** Enjoy the pinto beans fresh out of the slow cooker==== Variations====

5 **Add bacon or salt pork to the beans.** Pinto beans are often prepared with some form of pork. Add the bacon or pork to the beans when you would otherwise add margarine or seasonings

- Use 1 slice of thick-cut bacon per 1 cup (250 ml) of dry pinto beans. Cut the bacon into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces before adding it to the simmering beans
- Similarly, cut 1/4 lb (115 g) of salt ham into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes or strips and add the pork to 1 lb (450 g) of simmering pinto beans.
- Pinto beans prepared with pork products are often prepared with chopped onion, as well. Chop up 1/2 to 1 full onion per 1 lb (450 g) of pinto beans.

6 **Vary your spices.** You can get creative with your beans. Instead of using plain salt and pepper, try a "pinto bean seasoning" blend or some of your favorite seasonings.

- A few dashes of chili powder or paprika can give your beans an added punch
- Garlic powder or onion powder are other popular choices.
- For an even stronger kick, add chopped jalapeno peppers or a few dashes of hot sauce#Create a healthy version of refried beans. Mash your cooked, tender pinto beans with a fork to create a refried beans dish.
- Sauté 1 minced garlic clove and 1/2 an onion, diced, in olive oil until tender. Add the beans and a little of the cooking liquid the beans sat in. Cook for a few minutes before mashing
- You could also puree the beans in a blender instead of mashing them with a

7 **Finished.**

Community Q&A

How many pounds of pinto beans would it take to feed 300 people?



Roughly 300 pounds should do it. If you were to have 400 people, I'd say you wouldn't need quite as much, though. In that case, 50-60 pounds would be good.

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Tips

- Instead of soaking the beans overnight, you can soak them in hot water for an hour or so before cooking them.
- Adding a pinch of salt to the soaking water will help make the beans softer.
- Serve the beans with [cornbread](#). This is only optional, of course, but cornbread is a common accompaniment to pinto beans. This is especially true of beans prepared with bacon or salted pork.

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