



How to Cook Dried Beans

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Beans are a great addition to any well-balanced diet. They are easy to cook and versatile in recipes as side dishes or as main courses. Canned beans can often lack flavor and have a mushy consistency. Thus, properly-cooked dry beans are often preferred for their rich taste and firm, tender texture.

- *Prep time (quick soak): 60-80 minutes (active prep: 15 minutes)*
- *Cook time: 30-120 minutes*
- *Total time: 90-200 minutes*

Method
1

Sorting and Cleaning Beans

- 1 Sort through the beans and discard any that are shriveled or discolored, as well as any stems, debris or dirt.** Go through your desired amount of beans before you wash them. Pay special attention to any small rocks or pebbles that may have inadvertently made their way into the packaging.
- 2 Place the dried beans in a colander and wash them quickly.** Run cool water over the beans for about half a minute.

Method
2

Soaking the Beans

- 1 Use the slow soak method if you've got a night to soak your beans.** The slow soak method is a preferred method of preparing beans if you've set aside enough time to soak overnight. Slow soaking ensures that the final product is fully cooked, not crunchy or underdone.
 - If you choose the slow soak method, put the beans in a 5 qt. (4.7 l) saucepan and cover them with about 8 cups (about 2 l) of water. Put the lid on the saucepan and allow them to soak overnight in the refrigerator.
- 2 If time is of the essence, try the quick soak.** For a faster soak, put the beans and water in a saucepan and bring them to a boil. Allow them to boil for about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat, cover it with a lid and let the beans soak for at least 1 hour.
- 3 Wait for the beans to double or triple in size, depending on what soaking method you decide to use.** If you leave your beans in cool water overnight, expect them to at least double in size. Make sure your cooking vessel is large enough to accommodate this transformation.
- 4 Rinse the beans thoroughly in a colander after soaking.** Your beans are now ready to be cooked.

Method
3

Cooking the Beans

- 1 Put the beans in a large cooking pot and add enough water to completely cover them.**
- 2 Add a tablespoon of vegetable or olive oil to the pot to cut down on excessive foam and boil-over while the beans are cooking.** Because the beans expand while cooking, periodically adding small amounts of water to the pot will keep them adequately covered, ensuring even cooking.

- 3 Simmer the dried beans on low to medium heat.** Properly soaked beans usually require between 30 minutes and 2 hours of cooking.
- 4 Consult the proper cooking time of the types of beans you're using.** Cooking times will vary depending on the variety of dried bean.
 - Black beans: 60 minutes
 - Light/dark red kidney beans: 90 to 120 minutes
 - Navy beans: 90 to 120 minutes
 - Great northern beans: 45 to 60 minutes
 - Pinto beans: 90 to 120 minutes
- 5 Test the dried beans by mashing one with a fork or between your fingers.** Ideally, your beans will be tender but not mushy. If your beans are still crunchy or underdone after the recommended cooking time, continue cooking at a simmer, checking every 10 minutes for doneness.
- 6 Serve the cooked beans.** Refrigerate any leftovers.

Method
4

Using Beans in Other Recipes

- 1 Learn how to cook specific varieties of beans.** Beans, beans, the magical fruit! Beans are healthy, cheap, and easy to cook. Where can you go wrong? Learn specific ways of cooking beans from the following articles.
 - [Cook pinto beans](#)
 - [Cook lima beans](#)
 - [Cook black beans](#)
 - [Cook cannellini beans](#)
- 2 Make vegetarian chili with black and red beans.** Who says that chili needs to contain meat? A perfectly hearty and delicious chili can be made using mainly beans — red and black beans. Perfect for cool days when your inner cowboy is feeling hungry.
- 3 Make red beans and rice.** This Caribbean staple is sure to leave you satisfied, especially if you're pairing your meal with something like seafood. Deceptively simple but definitely filling!
- 4 Try red bean hummus.** Tired of the same old hummus over and over again? How about a bit of a change? If you like hummus and are on the adventurous side, try this recipe on for size.
- 5 Cook mung (mung) beans, Filipino style.** Also known as mung beans, or green gram, this green bean is popular in India and Southeast Asia for being used both in sweet and savory dishes.

Community Q&A

How long can you store dried beans?

wikiHow
Contributor

Dried beans should be used within a year of purchase; otherwise, they will never re-hydrate fully, and will be hard even after cooking.

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Can I put fresh kidney beans directly into my soup without washing them?

wikiHow
Contributor

No. You should wash beans and any vegetables you put into your soup.

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Tips

- Though the faster, hot soak method takes less time for bean cooking preparation, keep in mind that it is more likely to cause the beans to come out of their shells and break apart.
- Once you have learned how to cook dried beans, try different varieties. There are many to choose from that vary in taste, texture and nutrients.
- Another benefit of using dried beans instead of canned is that they have no added sodium. Canned beans often have high levels of salt.
- Prepare ahead of time when learning how to cook dried beans so you can use the traditional overnight soaking method. Cooked dried beans turn out best when allowed to soak longer because they are less likely to break apart. They also retain more flavor.
- Lentils such as black eyed peas and split peas do not need to be soaked prior to cooking.
- Ideally, store your beans in mylar bags specially designed for long-term storage. Glass canning jars are also acceptable, but allow light to gradually attack the beans. If you decide to use a canning jar to store your beans in, make sure to store in a completely dark place and in smaller quantities.
- If you are planning on storing larger quantities on beans, consider investing in oxygen absorbers. Oxygen absorbers usually use iron oxide to keep stored food tasting fresh and smelling great.
- Store your sealed beans in a dry, dark place for up to two years. Like any food, beans have a limited shelf life, although that shelf life can be extended with the proper precautions. Light and oxygen are beans two main culprits. Light tends to fade the color of beans, while oxygen causes the oils in beans to go rancid.^[1]

Warnings

- Do not attempt to cook dried beans without soaking them first. They will turn out tough and lack flavor.
- When cooking dried beans, do not add acidic ingredients, such as tomato sauce or vinegar, to them until they are tender. This will cause them to become mushy.

Things You'll Need

- Dried beans
- Water
- Colander
- 5 qt. (4.7 l) saucepan
- Large cooking pot

Sources and Citations

1. <http://extension.usu.edu/foodstorage/htm/dry-beans>

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