

HOW TO COOK BEANS

Prepare the Beans

It is always best to sort through your beans before cooking them. Remove any vegetable material that came from the farm such as twigs or little stones. After sorting you should give them a good rinse with fresh water.

Soak the Beans

Once sorted, soak the beans. Soaking is a physical process that causes a chemical reaction that changes the starches inside the bean. It is a very important step in cooking dried beans. Lentils, split peas (both yellow and green, and moong dahl do not need to be soaked because they have very thin skins or no skins at all.) Usually, beans will double or triple in size after soaking up all of that water. If you choose not to soak your beans they will take longer to cook and can cause stomach distress in some people that can be avoided by soaking. It is very important not to add salt or acidic ingredients, like vinegar, tomatoes or tomato juice, as this will slow the cooking process. Instead, add these ingredients when the beans are just tender.

Although many instructions call for soaking overnight, it is easier to put the beans in cold water, about 5 times their weight, bring the beans to a boil for about 5 minutes then remove from the heat. Let the beans stand for 2 hours. Drain out any remaining water before cooking. Do not reuse the soaking water. Always cook the beans in fresh water. (For two cups of beans, you would need anywhere between 5 and 10 cups of water).

Dried Bean Guide <i>Use this guide to gauge how much dried beans to cook.</i>	
1/3 cup dry beans =	1 cup cooked beans
1/2 cup dry beans =	1 1/2 cups cooked beans
2/3 cup dry beans =	2 cup cooked beans
1 cup dry beans =	3 cups cooked beans
2 cups (1 pound) dry beans =	6 cups cooked beans

To cook the beans, use a heavy metal pot or saucepan.

After soaking, drain the beans and add fresh water to the cooking pot. At this point, I like to add a strip of Kombu I learned this when my husband and I first met and he was eating a Macrobiotic Diet. The Kombu is supposed to help in stomach distress that some people get from eating beans, but it also adds minerals to them. Once the beans have been cooked, remove the strip of Kombu before starting the recipe. (It gets kind of slimy and breaks up easily.)

Bring the beans to a boil, and then lower the heat and simmer for 60 to 90 minutes, or until the beans are tender. NOTE: When cooking beans, always simmer. Boiling can cause the cooking liquid to overflow, as well as the beans to break apart and the skins to separate.

- **High Altitude:** As altitude increases, dried beans take more time to rehydrate and cook. The difference begins to be noticeable above 3,500 feet.

Beans are done when they can be easily mashed between two fingers or with a fork. Always test a few beans in case they have not cooked evenly.

Beans taste better if cooked a day ahead, but they should be refrigerated to avoid becoming sour. When cooked, they can be frozen. Store cooked beans, covered, for up to four days in your refrigerator. Cooked beans can be frozen up to 6 months.

Beans (soaked)	Saucepan	Pressure Cooker <i>at 15 Lb. Pressure</i>
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Black Beans	1 to 1½ hours	5 to 8 Min.
Garbanzo Beans	1 to 1½ hours	5 to 7 Min.
Great Northerns	1 to 1½ hours	5 to 7 Min.
Lima Beans, Large	45 to 60 minutes	Not Recommended
Lima Beans, Baby	1 hour	Not Recommended
Navy or Small Whites	1 to 1½ hours	5 to 8 Min.
Pink Beans	1 to 1½ hours	6 to 8 Min.
Pinto Beans	1 to 1½ hours	5 to 7 Min.
Red Beans	1 to 1½ hours	6 to 8 Min.
Red Kidney Beans	1 to 1½ hours	5 to 8 Min.
Soybeans	3 hours	12 to 15 Min.
Beans (not soaked)	Saucepan	Pressure Cooker*
Black-Eyed Peas	1 to 1½ hours	Not Recommended
Lentils	30 to 45 minutes	Not Recommended
Split Peas, Green	30 to 45 minutes	Not Recommended