

Uncertain Tough Times article  
Nancy Clark, ISU Nutrition & Health Field Specialist

## Use Your Bean

Dry beans can help you stay within your budget by replacing or extending the amount of meat used in your meals. “Dry beans” refers to beans that are dry-packaged in sealed bags and those that are pre-cooked in cans. Dry beans include varieties such as Kidney, Pinto, Navy, Lima and Black beans, but not green beans or soybeans.

Besides being inexpensive, beans contain NO cholesterol, are low in fat, and rich in complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, minerals and fiber (especially soluble fiber which can help lower cholesterol). Beans provide heart-healthy amounts of folate, an essential nutrient that helps protect against heart disease. In fact, research shows that people who ate legumes four times per week had a nineteen per cent lower risk of developing coronary artery disease. The United States Department of Agriculture 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommends eating three cups of legumes per week for a 2000 calorie diet. One-fourth cup of cooked beans equals one ounce of lean meat.

Dry beans can help with weight management because they are low in fat. They are slowly digested so that you feel full for a longer time. This can help persons with diabetes maintain normal blood glucose levels as well as weight.

The U.S. Dry Bean Council gives these cooking yields:

- One lb dry beans = 2 cups dry beans
- One lb dry beans = 6 cups cooked beans, drained
- One cup dry beans = 3 cups cooked beans, drained
- One 15 oz can of beans = 1½ cups cooked beans, drained

And these tips:

- Add lemon juice, vinegar, tomatoes, chili sauce, ketchup, molasses or wine after beans have been fully cooked. Wait to add these and other ingredients rich in calcium or acids, which can prevent beans from becoming tender, until the beans are tender.
- Do not add baking soda to beans at any time. Baking soda robs the beans of the B-vitamin thiamin and may affect the flavor of the cooked beans.
- Natural foam or scum in the cooking water?—Don't worry. If you see brown foam in the pot, this isn't dirt. It's the protein from the beans coagulating on the surface. Simply skim off. A bit of butter or oil will prevent foaming.
- Salt?—Salt will toughen the beans during the cooking process, so only add it when the beans are almost tender. Do not add salt to the soaking water.

**Soaking Dry Beans:**

Sort and rinse. Throw away any that are discolored or shriveled. Rinse beans in cold water.

**Hot Soak (reduces actual cooking time and consistently produces tender beans)**

1. Place beans in a pot and add 10 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans.
2. Heat to boiling and boil for an additional 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Remove beans from heat, cover and let stand for 4 to 24 hours.

4. Drain beans, discard soak water and rinse with fresh, cool water.

### **Traditional Soak**

1. Pour cold water over the beans to cover.
2. Soak beans for 8 hours or overnight.
3. Drain beans, discard soak water and rinse with fresh, cool water.  
(Cold water starts the rehydration process slowly so beans will appear wrinkled after soaking.)

### **Quick Soak**

1. Place beans in a large pot and add 10 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans.
2. Bring to boil and boil for an additional 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Drain beans, discard soak water and rinse with fresh, cool water.

### **Cooking Beans**

1. Rinse the beans with water and then drain the water.
2. Put the beans in a large pot and add **fresh water** to cover them.
3. Heat beans and water to boiling, then turn the heat to LOW and cover the pot. Since beans soak up water, you may need to add more water during cooking.
4. When the beans are tender but firm, they're ready to eat!
5. Most beans will take 1 ½ to 2 hours to cook this way.
6. Cook more beans than you need and freeze for future meals.

Here is a side dish that is sure to please. If you make it with Black Beans you can call it a Hawkeye dish and if you use red beans like kidney beans, you can call it a Cyclone dish!

### **Beans with Corn and Tomatoes**

*Makes 4 servings*

*Each serving equals two vegetable servings*

- 1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium, no-fat-added black beans
- 1 cup cut tomatoes, fresh or canned
- 1 teaspoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed
- 1 clove garlic, pureed or roasted
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper or more to taste

1. Drain and rinse beans.
2. In a bowl, combine beans, corn, tomatoes and garlic.
3. Add parsley, pepper and chili powder. Combine and serve.

**Nutrition Facts per serving:** calories, 260; protein, 10g; fat, 2g; percent calories from fat, 7%; carbohydrates, 50 g; cholesterol, 0 mg; fiber, 8g; sodium, 430 mg