

## Cooking Dry Beans from Scratch CAN be Quick!

If you've avoided cooking dry beans from scratch because "it takes too long," consider the actual "hands-on" time can be just minutes!

All it takes is a little planning ahead for a time to soak the beans and a time to cook them. The following directions, adapted from information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Dry Bean Board, will help you get started.

There are two steps to cooking beans: soaking and cooking:

- Soaking beans allows the dried beans to absorb water, which begins to dissolve the starches that cause intestinal discomfort. While beans are soaking they are also double to tripling in their size.
- Cooking the beans makes them edible and digestible.



### Soaking Beans

(Note: Lentils, split peas and black-eyed peas do not need to be soaked.)

Pick through the beans, discarding any discolored or shriveled beans or any foreign matter. Rinse well.

While the traditional slow soak method takes longer than some methods, it is one of the easiest methods:

1. In a stockpot, cover 1 pound dried beans with 10 cups water.
2. Cover and refrigerate 6-8 hours or overnight.
3. Drain and rinse the beans.

### Cooking Beans

1. Return the soaked, rinsed beans to the stockpot. Cover the beans with 3 times their volume of water. Add herbs or spices (not salt), as desired.
2. Bring to a boil; reduce the heat and simmer gently, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until tender (the time will depend on the type of bean, but start checking after 45-60 minutes). Boiling beans will break the skins and leave you

with a mushy meal. Add more water if the beans are not covered. Most beans will cook in about 1 to 1-1/2 hours.

3. When the beans are tender, drain and use in recipes; or for later use, immerse them in cold water until cool, then drain well and freeze in 1- to 2-cup packages. One pound of dried beans will yield about 5 or 6 cups cooked beans.

**TIP:** See "Freezing Cooked Food for Future Meals: Freezer Bag Tips" for tips on freezing cooked dry beans at [lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-freezing-techniques.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-freezing-techniques.htm)

## Bean Cooking Tips

Do not add salt or acidic ingredients, like vinegar, tomatoes or juice, this will slow the cooking process. Instead, add these ingredients when the beans are just tender.

Cooking times vary with the types of beans used but also may vary with their age.

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

*(Source: Adapted from "5 A Day: Vegetable of the Month: Beans" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/month/beans.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/month/beans.htm))*

## BEAN MATH

- One 15-ounce can of beans = one and one-half cups cooked beans, drained.
- One pound dry beans = six cups cooked beans, drained.
- One pound dry beans = two cups dry beans.
- One cup dry beans = three cups cooked beans, drained.

## For more information and recipes for dry beans:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/month/beans.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/month/beans.htm)
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County [lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq\\_dry\\_beans.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq_dry_beans.htm)

## Questions or comments?

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Original article at: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-scratch-beans.shtml>