

Preparing Beans for Cooking

Rinsing- Rinse beans and lentils before soaking and cooking to remove dust any visible debris.

Soaking- Soak dry beans before cooking to return the moisture that was lost through processing the beans. Soaking process does the following:

- Reduces cooking time
- Removes much of the bean sugar that causes gas problems.
- Improves the bean's texture and appearance.

NOTE: Lentils, split peas and black-eyed peas may be cooked without soaking.

Traditional Soaking Method:

Cover beans with water at room temperature. Soak beans overnight or for 8-10 hours. Keep the beans covered with water while soaking. Drain and discard the soaking water. Rinse beans, drain and cook in fresh water.

Quick Soaking Method:

Place beans in a large pot. Bring the beans and water for soaking to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes. Remove the beans from the heat and cover the pot. Let beans stand for 1 hour. Rinse beans, drain and cook in fresh water.

Super Quick Method:

Skip the soaking step altogether by using canned beans. Rinse and drain the beans before cooking to removes excess sodium.

Tips For Beans:

- **Acid slows** the bean tenderizing process. Don't add acid food ingredients such as tomatoes, onions, lemon juice, or vinegar to the beans until they are nearly tender.
- Adding **salt** to beans during soaking or too early during cooking can also **toughen the seed coat** and prevent the absorption of liquid.
- **Cook double batches** of beans whenever possible. Freezing the leftovers saves soaking and cooking time in the future.
- Use **mashed beans as a thickener**. When you have leftover beans, mash or puree, and then freeze in ice cube trays. Once frozen, pop from the trays and store in a freezer container or bag. No need to defrost- just add directly too your soup, stew or sauce.
- **Canned beans**, rinsed and drained, are a quick and **convenient substitute** for cooked beans in favorite recipes.