

How to Cook Dry Beans

Soaking Beans and Legumes

All dry beans and legumes should be soaked before cooking. **Soaking shortens the cooking time and makes the beans more digestible.** To soak, cover the washed beans with four times their volume of water, then choose one of these soaking techniques.

1. **Normal soak:** Leave the beans to soak for 4-8 hours
2. **Healthiest soak:** Soak for 12-24 hours in hot water. The long soak makes the beans more digestible. You can write in a calendar to “soak beans” one morning, then the following morning “cook beans” for dinner that night. **Do not add any salt for the soaking period.**
3. **Quick soak:** (Less healthy, but works in a pinch) Bring the beans to a boil for one minute, cover, and let sit for one hour.

Cooking Beans and Legumes

1. **Normal Cook (with methods 1 and 3):** You have the choice of cooking in the soak water (more nutrients) or draining, rinsing and adding new water (less gas). Whether reusing soaking water or adding fresh, there should be twice as much water as beans. Boil furiously, uncovered, for ten minutes. Cover, lower heat, and simmer for 1-2 hours, until tender.

2. **Nourishing Cook (method 2):** Drain, rinse, put back in pot and add water to cover beans. Bring to a boil and skim off foam. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 4-8 hours.

Tips

- 1 c dry beans yields 2-2½ c cooked. Unless otherwise stated, amounts given in most recipes refer to the cooked volume.
- Salt can disrupt the cooking, so should not be added while soaking or during the first hour of cooking.
- It saves time and money to cook (at least) a whole pound of dry beans at a time. Then freeze the leftovers in 2-cup servings to make “a can” for future recipes. They also can hang out in the fridge for 1 week.
- If your beans are still crunchy or tough after the cooking time, add a pinch of baking soda to the water. It will foam up (normal) but after another 15-30 minutes, your beans should be soft.
- For lentils, you only need to cook them 30 minutes.