

# BEAN CUISINE

Beans, peas and lentils (also known as legumes) are being re-discovered as nutritious, inexpensive, versatile and tasty. Legumes are seeds that grow in pods, and include black beans, kidney beans, navy beans, pinto beans, soybeans, black-eyed peas, split green or yellow peas, chickpeas (garbanzo beans) and lentils.

Beans, peas and lentils have had a poor image in North America - perhaps because they remind people of the Depression; or perhaps because of the gas they produce in some people. But let's consider some of their virtues and some excellent reasons to include beans in our menus.

## Healthy and Nutritious

Legumes are an excellent source of protein. Whether you're a vegetarian or looking for occasional alternatives to meat as a main course, they're the way to go. Combined with rice, other whole grains nuts and seeds, they provide the complete protein our bodies need.

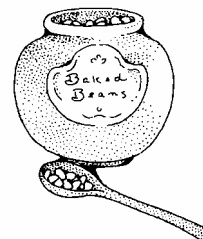
Beans, peas and lentils are a rich source of B-vitamins especially folacin and also supply calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium. They're also low in fat and high in fibre.

## Fast and Versatile

Beans, peas and lentils provide quick and nutritious meals. You can cook and freeze beans in quantity so you'll always have them on hand ready to go for any dish.

## Environmentally Friendly

Plant foods like legumes require fewer resources for their production and transportation than do animal foods. They're unrefined, unprocessed and grown right here in Ontario. They can be bought in bulk and stored for long periods.



## What About Gas?

Stomach gas or flatulence is caused by the breakdown of some of the fibre and the bean sugars by the bacteria in the large intestine. This should decrease as you get used to eating legumes more often. Split peas, limas and lentils are easier to digest, so start out with them. Soaking the beans overnight and throwing out the soaking water will help. Make sure to cook the legumes (especially soybeans) thoroughly, until they can be easily mashed with a fork.



**Nutrition**  
*Matters*

## How to Prepare Legumes

Dried beans, except lentils and split peas, must be pre-soaked using one of two methods:

1. Wash beans, place in four parts cold water and soak overnight or
2. Bring water and beans to a boil for two minutes, cover, remove from heat and let stand for one hour.

Before cooking the beans, drain and rinse them, then add fresh water to cover and cook until tender. Cooking times range from 1/2 to 1 hour for lentils to 2-3 hours for soybeans. For last-minute meals, you can use beans canned in water but rinse them well to reduce the salt added in canning. Don't forget ready-made canned beans in sauce for super fast meals.

## How to use Legumes

Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

- **In a salad:** allow cooked beans to sit in a vinegar-oil dressing for an hour or more; add raw or cooked vegetables and herbs.
- **In a saucepan:** mix cooked beans into a tomato sauce, then add cooked pasta and grated cheese.
- **In soup:** cook lentils in vegetable or chicken stock, add barley or brown rice and water, then herbs and some cooked vegetables.
- **In a spread:** make a puree of cooked beans, peas or lentils, add a little plain yogurt, mayonnaise, chopped onion and herbs. Use as a sandwich spread or dip.
- **Incognito:** substitute cooked legumes for part of the meat in recipes that call for ground meat, such as meat loaf, spaghetti sauce, lasagna and pizza.

Try this quick and easy recipe for lentil soup:

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### BASIC LENTIL SOUP



#### Combine:

1/2 lb. lentils (2 cups)  
6 cups water or broth  
Simmer 30 minutes or until tender.

#### Add:

- ✓ 2 carrots, diced
- ✓ 1/2 cup sliced green onions
- ✓ 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ✓ 1 1/2 cups tomato juice
- ✓ 1/2 cup minced fresh parsley
- ✓ 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- ✓ 1 teaspoon salt
- ✓ dash of pepper

Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer just until carrots and lentils are tender. Check seasoning and serve. Serves 6.

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More recipes using legumes can be found in:

- *The Amazing Legume*, by Alice Jenner
- *Bean Cuisine*, by Nana Tupper Chapman
- *Full of Beans*, by Kay Spicer and V. Currie
- *Vegetarian Times: Low-Fat and Fast*, by the editors of *Vegetarian Times* magazine

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For more nutrition information, please call Health Line Peel at (905) 799-7700. October 1999