



## WISCONSIN SCHOOL NUTRITION IN A NUTSHELL

### Cooking With Dried Beans

Beans are a versatile food that can be used in many ways. They are a reliable source of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals and are naturally low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Beans are an excellent staple ingredient to add to any pantry and they provide a splash of color, flavor, and texture to all types of meals. Dried beans are a Wisconsin crop! Consider sourcing and using locally grown dried beans in place of canned beans in your recipes. To find farmers who sell dried beans, refer to the [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#).

Beans are edible seeds that are part of a larger family of crops called legumes.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of beans, peas, and lentils can credit either as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable OR 1-ounce equivalent (oz eq.) meat/meat alternate in the USDA Child Nutrition Program meal patterns. When offered as the meat/meat alternate, beans, peas, and lentils may count toward the weekly beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroup requirements, but may not count toward the daily or weekly vegetable component requirement.

#### Yields:

When cooking with beans, it is important to have a sense of how much you will need for a specific recipe. Dried beans and lentils expand when they cook, so there are more servings per cup than canned beans. Canned beans are already cooked and packed in liquid, which usually needs to be drained before using. Read your recipe carefully to find out how many cups of beans you need and adjust as needed for dried or canned beans. The information below provides an overview of the approximate yield of beans in various forms:

#### Forms and yields of dried beans:

Dry beans, one pound - Yields 2 cups dry beans  
Dry beans, one pound - Yields 6 cups cooked beans, drained  
Dry beans, one cup - Yields 3 cups cooked beans, drained  
Cooked beans, drained,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup = 2 oz eq. meat/meat alternate

#### Soaking Dried Beans

Dried beans and chickpeas are not cooked and need to be cleaned and soaked before adding to a recipe. Soaking dried beans and chickpeas reduces cooking time, helps beans cook evenly, allows beans to retain their shape (shorter cook times prevent them from breaking down), and can make them more easily digested. Dried peas and lentils do **not** need to be soaked.

#### Method

1. Place the beans in a large container and visually sort through them, removing any stones broken beans, or foreign objects. (Dried beans are a raw agricultural product and may contain small stones, sticks and other foreign material).
2. Add enough cool water to cover the beans completely.
3. Place under refrigeration and soak for a minimum of 8 hours or overnight.
4. Drain the beans and discard the soaking water.
5. Rinse with fresh, cool water before cooking.

## Cooking with Beans: Techniques and Methods

Beans are versatile and can be used in many types of recipes including soups, stews, salads, dips, and even desserts. Basic cooking methods to consider for dried beans are boiling and baking in an oven.

### Boiling (Stove Top) Method:

This technique is best for dried beans and lentils.

1. After soaking dry beans, or rinsing lentils, place them in a large pot with water over medium-high heat. Use enough water to cover the beans completely, about two inches above the beans.
2. Bring the beans to a boil, cover the pan, and lower the heat to a simmer. Due to long cooking times, liquid may evaporate and will need to be replaced during the cooking process.
3. Cooking times listed below show the amount of time that several types of beans typically need to cook after they have been soaked.
4. When the beans are fully cooked, use immediately or cool under refrigeration and add to a future recipe.

### Cooking times for common types of dried beans:

Baby lima beans - 90-120 minutes

Black-eyed peas - 60-90 minutes

Great Northern beans - 45-60 minutes

Kidney beans - 90-120 minutes

Lentils - 20-30 minutes

Pinto beans - 90-120 minutes

Chickpeas - 90-120 minutes

Black beans - 90-120 minutes

### Baking (Oven) Method:

1. Follow the instructions above for Soaking dry beans.
2. Place the desired amount of beans into an oven-safe container and add enough water to cover the beans completely, about one inch above the level of the beans.
3. Cover and place into a preheated 325° F oven.
4. Bake for 75 minutes and check beans for doneness. If they are still too firm or crunchy, return to the oven, checking every 15-20 minutes until done. The type and size of beans determines their cooking time.
5. When the beans are fully cooked, use immediately or cool under refrigeration and add to a future recipe.

*"Information adapted from the USDA's "Bean Basics: A Toolkit on How to Use Beans."*