

Cooking Legumes

Dried peas and lentils do not require pre-soaking and can easily be added to soups and stews with as little as 20 minutes of cooking time depending on the variety. Beans that require pre-soaking can be frozen in one-cup servings so they are easily defrosted for later use. When pre-soaking beans, using either the traditional overnight method or the short cut below, drain the pre-soaked beans and use clean water to cook. This eliminates some of the hard to digest starches and may reduce some of the unpleasant gastrointestinal effects.

Stovetop Cooking Times

Legume Variety (1 cup dried)	Soak Time* (hours)	Water (cups)	Time (hours)
Adzuki (or Azuki)	Optional	4	1.5
Black, Turtle	At least 4	4	1.5
Black-eyed Peas	Optional	4	1
Chickpea (garbanzo)	At least 4	4	3-4
Great Northern	At least 4	4	2
Kidney	At least 4	4	1.5
Lentil, green, brown	None	3	25-40 min.
Lentil, red, yellow	None	3	20-25 min.
Lima	6-8 hours	3	1.5
Mung	6-8 hours	3	1.5
Navy	6-8 hours	3	1.5
Soybean	6-8 hours	4	3.5
Split pea, yellow, green	None	3	45 min.

*Pre-soak short cut – place beans in pot and cover with 2-3 inches of cold water. Bring to a boil then turn off the stove, cover and allow to soak for an hour. Drain beans in a colander, put back into the pot covered with fresh water and cook according to recipe or chart above.

Ideas for eating dried beans, peas & lentils:

- Add cooked beans, peas and lentils to soups, salads, casseroles
- Replace some meat in spaghetti sauce with cooked white beans
- Mash or puree beans to make hummus, bean dips and spreads for sandwiches, crackers, rice cakes or raw vegetables
- Combine cooked beans, peas or lentils with whole grains such as rice, barley or spelt berries as a side dish
- Baked beans and bean salads are great with grilled meat/poultry, tempeh or portobella mushrooms
- Refried beans (low-fat versions) in burritos or with grilled fajitas
- Hearty bean, pea or lentils soups with whole grain bread make a healthy and satisfying winter meal



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Dried Beans, Peas & Lentils

Legumes include beans, peas and lentils and are a food staple throughout the world due to their nutritional properties, versatility and relatively inexpensive cost compared to other protein sources.

Current dietary guidelines recommend 3 cups of beans, peas or lentils each week. This is based upon the nutritional benefits of eating these powerful plant foods. Legumes are best known for their high fiber (and low fat) content. One cup of cooked beans, peas or lentils contains between 10 and 16 grams of dietary fiber – one third to one half the adult recommendation for a whole day. In addition to both cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber and the insoluble fiber that keeps the digestive tract working well, legumes contain protein, iron, the B vitamin folate, and magnesium. Many legumes are also good sources of thiamine (B1), potassium, manganese, molybdenum and contain some calcium and zinc.

In addition to vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber legumes are good to excellent sources of various beneficial plant compounds. The darker colored beans are particularly high in these substances with black beans as rich in anthocyanins as grapes and cranberries. Anthocyanins act as antioxidants helping to destroy free radicals that can cause cell damage related to many chronic diseases.

A Word About Digesting Legumes

Many people shy away from eating beans due to the unpleasant after effects. For those who do not consistently eat a high fiber diet, legumes can produce flatulence, bloating and changes in bowel movements. This is especially true when increasing beans is accompanied by eating more whole grains, vegetables and fruit. Keep in mind the effects vary individually and some legumes may affect your system more than others. If you are not used to eating beans begin with small portions and increase your fluid intake to help with digestion. Soups are an excellent way to manage the added fiber in beans, peas and lentils. There are also spices used in bean-loving cultures that may help with digestion such as fennel seeds, mint and components of curry. There are enzyme supplements such as Beano™ that also aid digestion of beans.



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