Dry Beans 101

Dry beans are an incredibly nutritious, versatile and inexpensive ingredient. They are the cheapest form of protein. **The cost of one ½ cup serving of dry beans is about one-third the cost of canned beans.** They are easy to cook and require only a pot, water, salt, and time.

**STEP 1: Clean the Beans**
- Plate the beans in a shallow layer in a pie plate, baking sheet, or bar pan.
- Pick out and discard any foreign objects like leaves, small stones or twigs, as well as any broken beans.

**STEP 2: Rinse the Beans**
- Rinse them in the pot you will use for cooking until the water is clear and drain.

**STEP 3: Soak the Beans, if desired or necessary**
- There are two soaking methods you can use, the Traditional Soak Method, and the Quick Soak Method.

**STEP 4: Cook the Beans**
- Place beans in a large stock pot and cover with fresh, cold water.
- Place over medium heat; keep cooking water at a gentle simmer to prevent split skins.
- Since beans expand as they cook, add warm water periodically during the cooking process to keep the beans covered.
- Stir beans occasionally throughout the cooking process to prevent sticking.
- Beans take 30 minutes to 3 hours to cook, depending on the variety. Beans should be tender but not mushy.

**Bean Soaking Methods**

**Traditional Soak**
- Place beans in a large pot and cover with 2 inches of water. Add 2 spoons of salt.
- Soak beans for 8 hours or overnight. Refrigerate if the room is hot.
- Drain beans and discard soak water.

**Quick Soak**
- Pour cold water over beans to cover.
- Bring to boil and boil for an additional 2 to 3 minutes.
- Remove beans from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour.
- Drain beans and discard soak water.

**Basic Bean Recipes**

**Kidney Beans—Vegetarian**
1 pound kidney beans, cleaned, rinsed, and soaked
3 cups chopped vegetables, a combination of onions, celery, and carrots
3-4 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
Salt
Water to cover

In a large pot combine beans, vegetables and garlic and cover with about 2 inches of water. Add 1-2 teaspoons of salt. Bring to boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to simmer and cook, uncovered, until tender. Start testing the beans for tenderness after an hour. The beans should be tender, not crunchy, but not mushy. Test every half hour until done. Add more water if necessary to keep beans covered. Stir regularly to keep from burning, more frequently as they become more done. When done, adjust the salt. Add a little, stir and taste. Enough salt is needed to bring out the flavor of the vegetables and beans. Keep adding a little bit, stir, and taste until it is to your liking. Store cooked beans in the refrigerator and add water as needed when reheating. Makes 6-8 cups.

**Variation, Lima Beans and Ham**
1/4—1/2 pound of ham, chopped small
1 pound baby limas, cleaned, rinsed, and soaked
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Follow directions for the kidney beans with the substitutions. Add the ham at the beginning of cooking. Be careful with the salt as the ham is salty. Makes 6-8 cups.

Things to Add to Beans

**Flavors and Herbs, dried or fresh:**
- Garlic
- Celery root
- Greens like Kale
- Peas
- Radishes
- Capers
- Shallots
- Tomatoes, all types
- Lemon
- Lime
- Orange
- Sweet potato
- Winter squash
- Potatoes
- Avocado

**Meats and miscellaneous to add:**
- Rice
- Stocks, bouillon, broths
- Cheese
- Cream, sour cream
- Wine
- Sherry
- Ham and ham hocks
- Smoked meats
- Poultry
- Beef
- Pork
- Bacon
- Fish
- Butter
- Lamb
- Duck
- Sausage
- Nuts

**Vegetables and fruits to add:**
- Onions, all kinds
- Carrots
- Celery
- Bell peppers

Additional Resources

https://www.usdrybeans.com/health-nutrition/bean-facts/
https://www.epicurious.com/ingredients/why-you-should-switch-to-dried-beans-article
https://www.bonappetit.com/recipes/family-meals/slideshow/bean-recipes