

USING BEANS TO YOUR BENEFIT

Beans are a nutrient-dense food high in fiber and quality protein that are often overlooked as a tasty and therapeutic feast. The type of fiber they contain, guar gum, is useful in controlling many health problems. For heart disease and high blood fats, beans lower cholesterol. For blood sugar problems such as hypoglycemia or diabetes, beans have a powerful stabilizing effect on one's blood sugar. From dips to main dishes, they are versatile and satisfying. Try the recipes on the following pages.

DEGASSING BEANS

Many people avoid beans because they find that they themselves are avoided after partaking of "the magical fruit that makes you toot." The following methods can be used individually or in combination to enhance digestability. Methods 1-5 are best used all together. If after trying these you still have difficulty, use methods 6-8 (each separately) and/or consider having your digestive function evaluated.

1. **Soak/rinse:** Soak beans for at least 3 hours; discard this water and add fresh water (being sure the water level is at least one inch above the beans.) Cook the beans for 30 minutes and change the water again; continue to cook the beans.
2. **Seaweed:** Add a piece of Kombu or other sea vegetable strip to pot of beans while cooking.
3. **Quantity Control:** If you are not a regular bean eater, encountering large amounts may simply be too much for your gut to tolerate, in which case, the following gradual, progressive intake method might help:

WEEK	EAT	# TIMES PER WEEK
1	1 Tbls.	3 times
2	1 " "	4 " "
3	2 " "	4 " "
4	1/4 cup	4 " "
5-6	1/2 cup	4 " "

4. Eat slowly and chew thoroughly in a calm, relaxed environment.
5. Avoid concentrated sweets (even fruit) within TWO HOURS of eating beans (and other protein-rich foods.)
6. **Slow cook:** Cook beans for TWO DAYS in the slow-cooker (crock-pot.)
7. **Potassium Iodide Solution:** (prescription only) Add 3-4 drops to pot of cooking beans.

NOTE: The seaweed, mentioned above, provides this same substance in a less potent form.

8. Sprouted beans are much more digestible and nutritious than unsprouted, cooked beans. Sprouted mung and soy beans are available in most stores. Consult a "Sprouting Chart" for simple methods of sprouting all other types of beans.

9. Canned beans are fine. Just rinse well.

10. Ferment the beans - SEE OVER →

KARL J. MINCIN
CLINICAL NUTRITIONIST
(360) 770-8486

Gas-free

Beans are darn near perfect. Not only are they low in fat and sodium; they're also chock-full of fiber, phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals, and protein. But we all know their tragic flaw: gas, a result of beans' undigestible sugars. Now bean lovers (not to mention those around them) have a reason to rejoice.

Venezuelan researchers report that the key to making gas-free beans is fermenting the beans before cooking them (*Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, 2006, vol. 86, no. 8). The secret lies in two strains of bacteria, *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus plantarum*. You can encourage these helpful bacteria to grow either by adding them to a batch of beans before cooking, or (as savvy cooks will tell you) by cooking beans in

the juices from a previous batch. Bonus: Once these fermented beans are cooked, the amount of nutrients that can be digested and absorbed increases significantly. —H.K. Jones

Breakfast Beans

Electric slow cookers, available under several trade names, are perfect for cooking breakfast beans. Use the Red Bean or White Bean Mix (p. 285) or any other combination that appeals to you. Here is one we're currently fond of.

½ cup dried whole or split peas

¼ cup lima beans

¼ cup garbanzos

1 teaspoon basil

¾ teaspoon salt

2 cups water

OPTIONAL

¼ onion, chopped

1 bay leaf

Follow instructions for use of your slow cooker. We put ours on high until the beans come to a boil, then turn it to low to cook overnight. More water often needs to be added in the morning. The joy of it all is that even the most resistant beans (like soybeans and garbanzos) are tender by breakfast time, using minimal electrical energy. Enjoy breakfast beans with whole-grain toast, corn bread, or hot cereal. Polenta and Red Bean Mix is a hard combination to beat.

BLACK BEANS AND RICE

A Cuban favorite teams black turtle beans with brown rice. Serve hot beans and rice with condiments of chopped hard cooked eggs, minced green onions and lemon wedges. It's wonderful! Cook the beans with bay leaf, chopped onions and green pepper. Add a squirt of lemon juice at the end of the cooking period. Any leftover beans can be pureed into a delicious soup, adding sherry, to taste at the end of the cooking period. Or serve cold with a dash of sherry.

CORNBREAD, CHEESE, AND BEAN COBLER

Serves 3-4

4 cups cooked beans (most any)
½ cup grated cheese of choice
1 cup cornmeal
½ tsp baking soda

from *Enough Is A Feast*

¼ tsp salt
1 cup yogurt
1 egg
3 Tbl safflower oil

Spoon the beans into a 6 cup baking dish. Sprinkle the cheese over the beans. Set aside. Combine the cornmeal, baking soda, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat together the yogurt, egg, and oil. Stir this into the cornmeal mixture until well blended. Spoon the batter on top of the beans. Bake in a PREHEATED 425F oven for 20 minutes.