

Using the Old Bean

Many people today are eating a more plant-based diet. They are not vegetarians and do eat some eggs, cheeses and meats. Beans are often part of these healthier diets. People like the way they taste and enjoy the variety beans can add to salads, soups and main dishes. One of the best things about beans is that they are a form of slowly absorbed carbohydrate. This means they supply a steady amount of energy and are an excellent choice for people concerned about their blood sugar, such as athletes and people with diabetes or hypoglycemia. Beans are also a good source of soluble fiber — the kind that helps lower blood cholesterol.

At a Glance...

- Beans have long been a favorite food in Kentucky.
- They are high in iron and fiber, yet low in fat.
- Beans are a very good source of protein.
- Beans are easy to keep on hand and prepare.

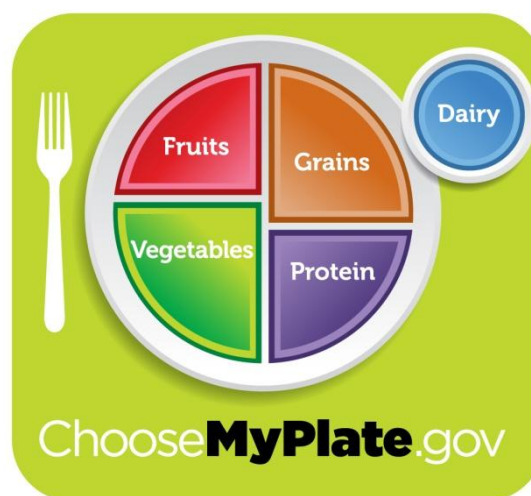
The Average Bean

A ½ cup serving of cooked beans provides a wealth of nutrition.

Calories	100-130
Protein	6-7 grams
Fat	0-1 gram
Total fiber	6-10 grams
Soluble fiber	2-3 grams

Where's the Bean?

MyPlate helps in planning meals that use more vegetables and carbohydrates. Beans fit into the protein group. Since beans are a good source of protein, they can help balance meals with protein and carbohydrate. Just a small amount of meat, cheese or egg will make the protein complete. If eaten with rice or corn, beans make a vegetarian meal with high quality protein.



A Hill of Beans

The primary difference between canned and dried beans is how long it takes to cook them. Canned beans are more convenient and are just as nutritious as the dried form. If you are concerned about sodium intake, preparing beans from scratch will allow you to add less salt. You can reduce the amount of sodium in canned products by discarding the liquid and rinsing.

If you like beans, but they don't seem to like you, try them again, but start small. Research has shown that people tolerate beans better if they are added slowly to the diet. Try small amounts more often at first, for example, a ½ cup serving, twice a week.

Some beans may produce less gas than others. Try lentils, black beans, black-eyed peas or field peas since these are smaller and may be more easily digested. Probably the best way to reduce the gas associated with beans is to always discard the water used to soak dry beans and to drain and rinse canned beans. Only a small amount of nutrients will be lost.

Beans come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and colors. Do a bean survey of your grocery store by checking the stock of canned beans, frozen beans, bean soups and dry beans. Beans can be eaten in cold salads during hot weather or hot soups in the winter. Choose some from the list below.

Types of Beans	
Navy beans	Pinto beans
Cannellini	Kidney beans
Black beans	Lima beans
Black-eyed peas	Split peas
Field peas	Lentils
Chick peas (garbanzo beans)	

Once you identify the beans available in your grocery store, you can select recipes using those beans or try substituting one kind of bean for another. This bean exchange is largely an educated guess. Generally, beans of like size and color can be easily substituted. For example, navy, pinto, garbanzo and white beans or lentils, black-eyed peas and field peas can be interchanged. Beans which are unique, such as black beans or red kidney beans, may not work well in place of another bean. Your taste for beans should help you decide which ones to use.

Bean Cooking Tips

- ✓ A 14 to 16-ounce can of beans contains about 1 ½ to 2 cups of beans.
- ✓ Dry beans will just about triple in amount when soaked and cooked, with 1 pound dry beans yielding about 6 cups cooked beans.
- ✓ To cook a pot of dry beans, add 6 cups of cold water for each pound of beans. You can soak

them overnight or boil for 2 minutes and soak for 1 hour. Discard the soaking water, rinse the beans and cook with fresh water. Unless the water is especially hard, adding soda to cooking water for dry beans is not necessary; however, acid ingredients such as tomatoes or vinegar should be added toward the end of cooking, since they slow the tenderizing process.

- ✓ Beans freeze well. Cook a double batch when you cook dry beans and freeze them to use later in recipes.
- ✓ Bean soups can be prepared in bulk and frozen in individual servings.

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