

Beans

Did you Know?

- Green beans are a legume. Legumes are plants with a pod that contain edible seeds, such as peas, numerous types of beans (e.g. kidney beans, chickpeas, black beans, etc.), lentils and peanuts. When classifying green beans into a food group, they are considered a "vegetable" since their pod is edible. Nutritionally, they have less carbohydrate and calories than other types of "beans".
- Beans come in a variety of shapes, lengths and colors. Some varieties include: Green beans, Long beans, Chinese long beans, tiny green beans (AKA Haricot OR French), Fava beans and Winged beans. Common garden beans include "Bush" and "Pole" beans, which each have different varieties.

Nutrition

At only 30 calories per 1 cup cooked, beans pack a lot of nutrition.
Beans are also a good source of:

Vitamins A, C, and K, along with Folate, Calcium, Iron, Potassium, and dietary fiber.
(You can read more about these nutrients in our previous fact sheets on peas, kale, lettuce and cucumber.)

Storage & Use

- When selecting, look for beans that are bright in color, smooth, firm and crisp. Avoid selecting beans that are wrinkled, soft or over mature (thick and tough).
- Store in a plastic bag for up to about 3 days in the refrigerator. Do NOT wash or rinse the beans before storing in the refrigerator, instead only wash right before using. Black spots can form if washed before refrigeration. When ready to use, remove stems and wash the beans under cold running water.
- The best way to cook green beans is to steam them for about 5–6 minutes or until tender and not overly mushy. This is an ideal way to cook them in order to lock in water-soluble vitamins, such as C and B vitamins. Cooking for too long or cooking in water will decrease water-soluble vitamin content.
- How else to eat beans? Consider eating raw by dipping in hummus or your favorite dressing. Add to soups, salads and wraps. Use steamed green beans in place of spaghetti or pasta using your favorite pasta sauce or pesto to coat. Enjoy steamed beans with simply fresh lemon juice or your favorite citrus juice. Try steamed beans with a little olive oil, garlic and Parmesan cheese. Or consider making green bean French fries (for a recipe, check out our Beans recipe sheet).

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