

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

COOKING WITH BEANS AND PEAS

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Beans and peas, like pinto beans, navy beans, black beans, black eyed peas, lentils and garbanzo beans (chickpeas), are packed with nutrients. Nutrients like protein, fiber, zinc, potassium and folate keep our body healthy. Beans and peas are affordable and easy to prepare. This fact sheet can help you prepare healthy dishes using canned, frozen and dried beans and peas.

Cooking With Dried Beans and Peas

Dried beans and peas are inexpensive and are a good choice for stocking your pantry because they have a long shelf-life. Dried beans and peas are easy to prepare, but take longer to cook than canned or frozen beans and peas.

- Dried beans can be stored safely in the pantry for at least a year, but it is recommended they be eaten within a year for best color and flavor.
- How long dried beans will last depends on how they are packaged and storage conditions.
- Store dried beans in airtight containers in a cool dry place.
- One pound of dried beans or peas will make about 5-6 cups of cooked beans or peas.



To Prepare Dried Beans and Peas:

1. **Soak.** The first step in cooking dried beans and peas is soaking. Choose a regular or quick soaking method.

Regular Soak: Add the dried beans or peas to a medium bowl and cover with room temperature water until the water is about 2 inches above the beans. Allow the beans or peas to soak in the water for at least four hours or overnight.

Quick Soak: Add the beans or peas to a stockpot and cover with water until the water is about 2 inches above the beans or peas. Over medium-high heat, allow the beans or peas to reach a boil and boil for about 2 minutes.

**Lentils do not require soaking prior to cooking.*

- 2. Drain and Rinse.** Drain the dried beans or peas and look for any debris, like small stones, that should be removed. Rinse the dried beans or peas under running water. This step is important because draining and rinsing the beans helps reduce some of the gas and discomfort that may be experienced from eating beans.
- 3. Cover with Water.** Add the beans or peas to a stock pot and cover with fresh water until the water is about 2 inches above the beans or peas. It will take about 6 cups of water to cover 1 pound of dried beans or peas.
- 4. Season.** Add a little bit of oil, about ¼ teaspoon, to prevent the beans or peas from foaming. Add seasonings like onion, garlic, herbs and spices to flavor your beans. Basil, rosemary, parsley, tarragon, bay leaf and thyme are some flavorings that pair well with dried beans and peas. Wait to add salt and acidic ingredients like tomatoes or vinegar until the beans are almost done because these ingredients may prevent them from becoming tender.
- 5. Simmer.** Place a lid on the pan and prop the lid. Simmer the beans or peas over medium-low heat until the beans or peas are soft and tender. Avoid a rapid boil because it can cause the beans or peas to break down. The amount of time that beans and peas will take to cook varies. Check the package for suggested cooking times and use the chart below as an estimate.

Variety of Beans and Peas	Cooking Time
Cannellini (White Kidney) Beans	2 Hours
Garbanzo Beans (Chickpeas)	2 ½ - 4 Hours
Fava Beans	1 ½ - 2 Hours
Lentils	45 Minutes
Navy Beans	1 ½ Hours
Pinto Beans	1-1 ½ Hours
Black Eyed Peas	1 Hour

Cooking Dried Beans and Peas in an Electric Multicooker

Dried beans and peas can be cooked quickly in an electric multicooker using the pressure function. When cooking beans and peas in your electric multicooker, do not fill the inner pot more than halfway so that the beans and peas have room to expand. Read your cooker's manual to determine if a small amount of oil should be added to reduce foaming. Foaming can block the valves causing the cooker to malfunction.

The amount of time needed to cook beans and peas will vary depending on several factors, including the variety of the beans and peas and the brand of the electric multicooker. Look for an estimated cooking time in your electric multicooker's manual. When the desired cooking time has been reached, allow the pressure to release naturally before opening the lid.

Cooking with Beans and Peas

Although you might see some recipes for cooking dried beans or peas in an electric multicooker that do not require soaking, keep in mind that soaking, draining and rinsing dried beans and peas helps reduce intestinal gas and discomfort.

Cooking Dried Beans and Peas in a Slow Cooker

Another easy method for cooking dried beans and peas is using a slow cooker. To cook dried beans and peas in a slow cooker, drain, rinse and soak the dried beans and peas. Add the drained and rinsed dried beans and peas to the slow cooker and cover with water until the water is about 2 inches above the beans or peas. Cook the beans and peas on low heat for 6-8 hours or until they are soft and tender.

Cooking With Canned Beans and Peas

Canned beans and peas are affordable, easy to prepare and have a long shelf-life.

- Canned beans and peas can be stored safely for two to five years in a cool, dry pantry. High temperatures shorten the shelf-life of canned foods.
- Canned beans and peas can be used past the “use by” or “sell by” date. These are dates from the manufacturer that indicate when food is the best quality.
- Avoid beans and peas from cans that are rusted and have dents in the seams. Leaking or bulging is a sign that food may be spoiled.
- For lower sodium options, look for “reduced sodium” or “no salt added” varieties when you are shopping for beans and peas. Compare products using the Nutrition Facts Label and choose the product lowest in sodium.
- Drain and rinse canned beans and peas to reduce sodium.
- To substitute canned beans or peas for dried beans or peas, one 15.5-ounce can is about 1 ²/₃ cups of cooked dried beans or peas.
- Canned beans and peas are good choices for salads and other recipes that cook quickly.
- Add canned beans and peas to salads, soups, tacos, burritos and pasta dishes.

White Bean Tomato Pasta

Serves: 4

Serving: 1 cup

What you need:

- ½ pound whole-wheat rotini noodles (½ of a 1-pound package)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ medium onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 15.5-ounce can low-sodium diced tomatoes
- 1 15.5-ounce can low-sodium cannellini (white kidney) beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ tablespoon Italian seasoning
- ½ tablespoon balsamic vinegar (optional)

Cooking with Beans and Peas

What to do:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- In a medium pot, bring water to a boil.
- After the water boils, add the rotini noodles and follow the package directions to cook until just tender. Drain the noodles.
- In a medium pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until the onion is clear, about 5 minutes.
- Add the diced tomatoes, cannellini beans, Italian seasoning and balsamic vinegar to the pan. Stir and cook over medium-low heat until the mixture is warmed.
- Add the drained noodles to the pan and serve.

Nutrition Information per Serving: Calories: 310, Total Fat: 5g; Saturated Fat: 1g; Protein: 14g, Total Carbohydrates: 58g; Fiber: 11g; Sodium: 128mg; Potassium: 596mg

Cooking With Frozen Beans and Peas

There are many varieties of beans and peas available in the frozen food section.

- For the best quality, frozen beans and peas should be eaten within eight months, but they will stay safe in the freezer as long as they are stored at a temperature of 0 F or below.
- For lower sodium, fat and calories, look for beans and peas without added flavoring and sauces.
- Use frozen beans and peas as a healthy side dish. Follow the package directions to prepare frozen beans and peas in the microwave or on the stove.
- Add frozen beans and peas to dishes like soups and stews for extra protein and nutrients.

Edamame Fried Rice

Serves: 4

Serving: 1 cup

What you need:

- Nonstick spray
- 2 large eggs
- ½ medium onion, diced
- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame
- 1 cup frozen stir fry vegetables*
- 2 cups brown or white rice, cooked
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce

What to do:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Spray a small pan with nonstick spray and warm over medium heat.
- Once the pan is warm, add the eggs and scramble until the eggs are cooked.
- Remove the eggs from the pan.
- Spray a medium pan with nonstick spray and warm over medium heat.

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- Once the pan is warm, add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent or about 4-5 minutes.
- Add the shelled edamame and frozen vegetables to the onions and heat until tender, stirring occasionally, about 7-8 minutes.
- Add the rice, cooked eggs and soy sauce to the pan, stir until combined and cook until warmed.

*You can use a variety of mixed frozen vegetables or fresh vegetables for this dish.

Nutrients per serving: Calories: 228; Total Fat: 6g; Saturated Fat: 1g; Protein: 12g; Total Carbohydrates: 32g; Fiber: 4g; Potassium: 331mg

For more healthy recipes visit:

choosemyplate.gov/myplatekitchen

References

foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app

spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/preparing-dry-beans

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