

BEANS & PEAS



Beans and peas are in season from July through October.

Tips for selecting beans and peas

The edible part of beans and peas lies within the pod. Choose pods that are plump, of similar size, and well-filled. Avoid pods with insect or disease damage, or rusty spots. Dry peas and beans are ready to harvest when the pods are dry, lighter in color, and shriveled. There are at least two ways to dry the edible part:

- Dry the pods on the vine itself until the beans rattle inside. Remove the shell by hand.
- Pull the entire plant up by the roots. Whack it back and forth inside a clean container to shatter the dried pods. The edible part will fall to the bottom.

Sort and discard inedible materials or any bean that is defective or discolored. If the peas or beans are somewhat moist or soft, place them in a single layer in the open air for one to two days. Drying can also be completed in the sun, an oven, or a dehydrator, but cool fully before packing.

Storage

Place in moisture-resistant container. Store in a cool, dry place for up to 1 year.

Preparation

Place dry peas or beans in a strainer and wash before using. **Soaking dry beans will shorten their cooking time:**

- Place 2 cups (1 pound) beans in 6 to 10 cups water.
- Bring to a boil and boil for 2 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let stand 1 hour.
- Drain soaked beans and transfer to a large kettle with 6 cups of fresh water.
- Cover partially (lid tilted) and simmer until beans are tender (salt may be added after beans are tender; use 2 teaspoons of salt for every pound of dry beans).
- Beans swell when they cook. Two cups of dry beans or dry peas yields about 5 cups of cooked beans or peas.

Key nutrients

- Fiber to prevent constipation
- Folate to prevent birth defects and reduce the risk of heart disease
- Iron for healthy blood
- Protein to build and repair body tissue

Recipe

Chunky meatless chili

- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
 - 1 medium onion, chopped
 - 3 garlic cloves, minced (optional)
 - 1 (16-ounce) can black-eyed peas, undrained
 - 1 (16-ounce) can whole kernel corn, drained
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
 - 1 cup uncooked rice
 - 1 (16-ounce) can kidney beans, undrained
 - 1 to 2 tablespoons chili powder
 - 1½ teaspoons ground cumin (optional)
- Grease or spray a 3-quart saucepan. Cook green pepper, onion, and garlic over medium-high heat for 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in the tomatoes, kidney beans, black-eyed peas, corn, water, rice, chili powder, and cumin. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add salt, pepper, or hot sauce to taste. Serve with low-fat sour cream or plain yogurt, chopped onions, and/or low-fat shredded cheese, if desired.

Recipe substitutions: Use 3 cups fresh, diced tomatoes with juice in place of the 28-ounce can of diced tomatoes, or use 1⅔ cup of cooked dry beans and ½ cup water in place of the 16-ounce can of peas or beans.



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