

Legumes

Combining legumes with cereal grains in the main meal provides plenty of complete protein in the diet. Many cultures of the world have relied on these combinations as the main staples in their diet. South Americans eat rice and beans, Mexicans eat corn tortillas and beans, people in India eat millet and lentils, Japanese eat rice and soybean curd (tofu), etc. This, along with their excellent nutrition and keeping qualities, is why they are so important in our food storage.

Beans are a great convenience food, and cooking them is simple. Following these simple rules will assure you get a delicious batch of beans every time.

- Sort out rocks and discolored beans, and then rinse thoroughly. Soak six hours or overnight to deactivate the phytates. Phytates are substances found in all seeds that prevent degradation of seeds, helping them keep for long periods of time. ~~When we use seeds without seed without~~ soaking them first, such as grinding flour and making bread, the phytates can bind many of the minerals. In the grains, making it hard for us to absorb them. So, to get the most value out of your seeds in storage, soak them for six to twelve hours first. Also, fermenting bread dough for at least six hours will deactivate the phytates in the wheat.
- Rinse and drain, then cook beans in water until tender, usually two or three hours.
- Don't add any other ingredients until after the beans become tender. Taste them to be sure they are tender. Salt, sugars and acidic foods like tomatoes, will keep the beans from getting tender. Exceptions: you can add onions, garlic and herbs if you like.
- Once the beans are tender, you can add all the flavorings and simmer for at least fifteen minutes.
- When beans reach tender stage, adding tomatoes, vinegar or sugars will "set" them and keep them from getting mushy.
- Different kinds of beans can be substituted for each other in recipes. As long as they are tender, they will be good no matter how you fix them.
- "Leftover beans taste better every time you re-heat them." -James Duckworth

There are many ways to flavor and prepare beans. Eating them regularly need not be boring. Think Mexican, Italian, East Indian, etc. Make sure you have these kinds of seasonings in your food storage. Mexican: garlic, onions, peppers, cilantro, tomato. Italian: garlic, onions, basil, rosemary, oregano, tomato. East Indian: curries, coriander, cumin, turmeric, paprika, cinnamon, garlic, onions.

As long as we have fresh vegetables we should use them, but when the time comes that we can't get fresh vegetables, you can soak your dried vegetables for one to four hours and then use them, or just add them to the cooking pot. Whole seeds, such as peppercorns, caraway, celery seed keep very well in a cool, dark, dry place. Keep ground seasoning in your freezer. Whole-leaf dried herbs keep up to four years in dry, sealed jars. Store at least four kinds of legumes and as many seasonings as you can use. I would never want to be without dried onions, garlic, peppers, celery and tomato. Having a large variety of flavorings, ~~beans~~^{beans}, and grains will make such a difference to your family when they are needed. Variety will make the difference between hating the food and enjoying it! A good pot of beans is one of life's simple joys. Use your imagination and experiment with them to create recipes you like. These recipes should serve as a guide to your future bean adventures.

Call me any time if you have Questions! *Jane Jensen: 801-546-0303*