

# BEANS

**Spanish:** frijoles **Russian:** fasol' (фасоль) **Vietnamese:** đậu

Beans are one of the longest-cultivated plants, and have been dated back to the Bronze Age in many parts of the world. Many of the beans we eat today, like lima and kidney, come from the Americas, and were grown by native American tribes along with maize and squash.

There are about 40,000 bean varieties that come in many different shapes and sizes, from the small, flat lentil to the large, round garbanzo bean.



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## FROM SEED TO PLATE



The bean is an annual plant, cultivated in the warm temperatures of the summer. Beans take from 45 to 75 days to mature from seed planting to harvest. Beans can grow on bushes (bush beans) or on long, spindly stalks (pole beans). When pods mature, they can be harvested and shelled or kept whole for processing and eating.

## IN THE GARDEN

Beans are fun to grow in school gardens! Students will enjoy picking pods off of bean plants and seeing the beans inside. We recommend planting bush beans, as they don't require trellises or supports.

For adventurous gardeners, here are some tips for how to grow your own beans:



**SUN:** Beans like to get lots of sun, and warm air temperatures of around 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit.



**WATER:** Evenly moist soil is best – too soggy, and beans can rot! Make sure the area is well drained.



**SOIL:** Soil should be well-drained and rich with organic matter. Compost can lighten heavier soils for optimum conditions.



**SEEDS:** Seeds germinate best in the summer in moist conditions.



**PLANT:** Sow seeds about one inch deep and press the earth firm over them.



**SPACE:** Plant bush beans about 3 to 6 inches apart.



**CARE:** If planted in a windy area, prop up plants with twigs or a cord around stakes.



**HARVEST:** Beans can be picked before seeds inside form bumps (for green or runner beans), when pods are plump but still tender (for fresh shelled or unshelled beans), or when they are brown and the seeds rattle inside them (for dried beans). Fresh beans will keep for several days in the refrigerator, and dried beans will keep for 10 to 12 months.

## STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Freshly picked beans will keep for several days in the refrigerator, but dried beans will keep for 10 to 12 months.
- Soak dried beans overnight before cooking to remove some of the indigestible compounds that can cause stomach upset.
- Check beans for shriveled or broken beans, stones or debris before using.

## IN THE KITCHEN

Beans are typically boiled and used in a variety of preparations, but some types – like green – can be eaten fresh as well! Beans add a healthy and delicious source of protein and fiber to whatever you eat with them. They are incredibly versatile, and you can find the right bean for any recipe! Add to all sorts of soups; mash to make an easy bean dip; mix with rice for a great side dish; use to make vegetarian burgers – beans are great in any meal!

Try the classroom recipe at home, with this family-size version:

### BEAN AND CORN SALAD

Makes about 6 cups (6-12 servings)

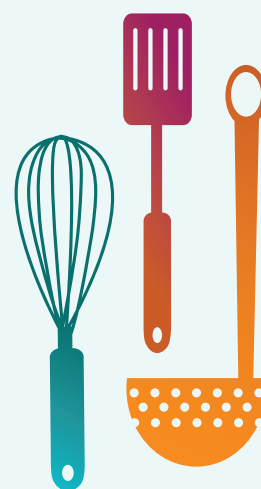
Based on recipe provided by Truitt Bros. Creative Culinary Consultants

#### INGREDIENTS

1 can black beans (12 oz.), drained and rinsed (approx. 1 3/4 cup)  
½ bag 12 oz. frozen corn (approx. 1 2/3 cup)  
1 red bell pepper, chopped (approx. 2/3 cup)  
1 large fresh tomato, diced (approx. 2/3 cup)  
1 Tbsp. lemon juice  
1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped (approx. 1/2 cup)  
1 Tbsp. garlic, minced  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. ground Black Pepper

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss.



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The family newsletter for beans can be sent home at the beginning of the month. The newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Print the first page only, or add photos and stories to the second page and print both sides for families.



### GET PARENTS' ATTENTION!

- Attach the newsletter to the child by attaching a string of yarn to the paper and making a newsletter “necklace” or pinning the newsletter to an article of clothing.
- Attach the newsletter to a drawing or other piece of artwork created by the child
- Get a set of “Ask me about \_\_\_\_” stickers or nametags, or use blank nametag stickers to draw attention to the fruit or vegetable of the month. Send each child home with an “Ask me about beans!” sticker for the beans month.
- Offer tastes of the recipe of the month at a parent meeting or when parents pick up their children from your site.

### BEAN VARIETIES



Pinto • Navy • Black • Garbanzo • Kidney



### ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family newsletters engage families as partners in helping children to develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.