



“It’s more fun to talk to someone who doesn’t use long, difficult words but rather short, easy ones like, “what about lunch?”

-Winnie the Pooh

Bean Box Goods July 2023

Summer has been uncommonly hot and rainy here in the Northeast. It’s a precarious time for all folks seeking to make a living from the Land and the wildfire smoke in the air and floodwaters in our downtowns seem to be making it precarious for the balance for folks living just about everywhere.

If you have the means, however humble, we implore you to consider making a donation of any size to NOFA’s [Farmer Emergency Fund](#) or like-minded causes working to channel resources to farms in crisis around the Northeast.

Wherever this finds you, I hope you and yours are safe, dry, and the skies are blue for the moment.

With the heat of summer about we have provided a couple lentil varieties, figuring their quicker cook times would be a welcome reprieve in the context of adding a boiling pot to an already-hot kitchen. These and the other beans provided are also all ones chosen for their ability to be as at home in cold dishes as warm and hot ones.

I’m going to reiterate some great bean-centered cookbooks here in case you missed them last time. I have them summarized in the Winter Bean Box recipe booklet, but to save space am just linking to them here:

[Bean By Bean](#), by Crescent Dragonwagon

[Cool Beans](#), by Joe Yonan

[Grist](#) is a book that came out just in 2021 from chef Abra Beren who works at the imitable [Granor Farms](#)

I’d also like to recommend the [Blue Zone](#) cookbooks by Dan Buettner, based on research and reporting he did for National Geographic on communities around the world with the largest concentrations of residents living to 100 years of age or older. There’s a lot to those stories, but beans and legumes generally are a part of that larger story.

There are of course many more books we could recommend, but this triad offers hundreds of recipes between them all, and I really do think they offer a bit more in terms of quality and diversity of ideas than many other cookbooks in this realm.

As always, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or feedback at orders@vermontbeancrafters.com

In this Box

Marafax Beans, Morningstar Farms, VT
Cannellini Beans, Carlson-Arbogast Farm, MI
Black Beluga or Golden Lentils from Timeless, MT
Winter Lentils from Martens’ Farm, NY
Mayocoba Beans, Carlson-Arbogast Farm, MI
Carolina Golden Rice from Marsh Hen Mill, SC

As a reminder, you can view our recommendations for cooking with beans on our website here <https://www.vermontbeancrafters.com/dry-beans>

**Marafax Beans (*P. Vulgaris*)
Morningstar Farm, VT**



These beans come from Seth and Jeanette Johnson of Morningstar Farm in Glover VT. They and their family grow an impressive array of organic beans, grains, sunflowers for oil, and hay in the beautiful Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Seth reported out that the recent storms washed out roads and bridges in his area and some of his fields were inundated with waist-high water, leveling their corn crop and leaving logs and debris in the field as the river receded. Their bean fields were higher up and spared, but all of this rain increases the risk of fungal diseases in many crops, including beans. Here's hoping all goes well and we can offer some of the 2023 marafax crop in future Bean Boxes.

I've shared before that marafax are my favorite for baked beans, but it's hard to think about baked beans in this heat though, as nice as they are as a sidekick to any barbeque. Instead, I'm recommending you keep things on the stovetop and save yourself some pre-heating time and ambient heat.

-Marafax with New Potatoes and Lemony Raab-

Firstly, of course, cook up your marafax beans (I always cook a full lb and freeze any extra). As they get to be that perfect, smooth texture remove the pot from heat and let it start to cool, fine-tuning the salt level if need-be. Put a well-seasoned cast iron or any wide-bottomed shallow-rimmed pot you have that has a good tight-fitting lid on a medium-low flame. Bi-sect some new potatoes or fingerlings, toss them with a high-heat oil and put them face down in the skillet. Cover. Check on them every 3-5 minutes. While you wait for those to brown toss some broccoli raab, kale, or spinach lightly with some salt, pepper, oil and lemon juice. Dice some feta. Once the potatoes start to get an even browned surface, turn off the heat, flip the potatoes browned-side up. Ladle the cooked marafax amidst the potatoes, filling the bottom of the vessel. Spread the greens and feta on top and place the lid back on top until the greens are a dark green (but not an over-cooked brown) and you are ready to serve. Squeeze a bit more fresh lemon juice and sprinkle some coarse salt on top of each serving you dish up.

**Cannellini Beans (*P. Vulgaris*)
Carlson-Arbogast Farm, MI**



A lot of folks may have come to know cannellinis through the cuisine of Italy (think pasta fagioli), but these likely originate from the lands around what is currently regarded as Argentina. Any white bean is difficult to grow east of the Rockies due to our wetter autumns which can lead to the discoloration of the seed coats. We're lucky to have these beans sourced from the Carlson-Arbogast family farm near my mother's home in central Michigan. The Great Lakes region is a premier growing region for dry beans, and a lot of contemporary improved varieties of beans are coming out of Michigan State University.

Griddled Tomato, Garlicky White Bean Toast

Pretty much every Sunday a cook a pot of beans for the week. When the work week rolls around and I'm navigating breakfast options on a quickly-passing summer morning, I like to toss a half-pint of cherry tomatoes or sungolds into my six-inch cast iron pan with a pat of butter and sprinkle of salt on medium-low heat. By the time I've walked my dog and baby around the block, I come in, pop some bread in the toaster while I feed the dog and wee one and all I need to do is rub a raw garlic clove into the toast while it's still hot out of the toaster and spoon on the reduction of cherry tomatoes awaiting in the skillet. You could always add an extra smear of butter, some [dulse flakes](#), minced chives, crushed red pepper, or a dash of your favorite vinegar to bring it up a notch and round out the flavor.

I eat some version of this most weeks as breakfast, but I also end up preparing it as an appetizer or side on pasta nights in our house as well.

Organic Golden Lentils or Black Beluga Lentils
Timeless Foods, MT (Lens Culinaris)



I can't hype up the farmers of Timeless Foods enough. They are featured in the [Lentil Underground](#), and have spent the last couple decades revolutionizing agriculture in parts of Montana that had been large monocrops of chemically-managed conventional wheat for much of the 20th century. These Black Beluga lentils in particular helped to put Timeless Foods on the map.

When cooked, they hold their color and their shape extremely well, glistening like caviar. They're good in any context that lentils are at home, but they hold their shape better than brown, puy, and red lentils, so you might as well save them for recipes where you can show them off, even if just lightly salted and served over the Carolina Golden Rice included in this Box.

Speaking of lentils and rice, here is a great short piece by [Dan of Cooks Illustrated](#) into the why rice and lentils are such a nutritious and delicious pairing. Hint: the essential amino acids of tryptophan and lysine are at play.

We ended up running a little short on our supply of black belugas relative to the orders that came in so there are some folks that are going to receive Golden Lentils instead of Black Beluga, but they came be treated much the same with the exception that the Golden Lentils end up breaking down more as they finish cooking compared to the slightly firmer-bodied Belugas.

Whichever you have in front of you, I recommend cooking them simply with a pinch of salt. When they have reached their creamy, starchy perfection, spoon onto bowls of rice or atop some pita, crusty bread, or crunchy romaine leaves. Adorn with a glug of olive oil, fresh lime juice and cilantro (or flat-leaf parsley if you don't do cilantro).

It's very worth your while to add [raita](#) to your repertoire if it's not already. It's simple, refreshing, and adds a vibrant, tangy, fatty layer to any meal. One part rice, one part lentils, one part raita make a meal worth having on a regular basis.

Organic Winter Lentils
Martens' Farm, Penn Yan NY (Lens Culinaris)



As forementioned in the preamble to this booklet, these lentils are of special note. For primarily climatic reasons, the major lentil producing regions in the western hemisphere are in parts of Canada, Montana, and the Palouse region, which spans across northern Idaho and southeastern Washington. Hanna and Peter Martens are the generation following in the iconic footsteps of Mary Howell and Klaus Martens of Lakeview Organic Grains in Penn Yan NY. They grow an impressive variety of legumes and grains interspersed with cover crops and have a world-class seed cleaning operation that gets utilized by other farms in the region. Their family has been at the crest of the wave of organic grains and cover cropping for over thirty years now, and with recent investments they've made they are set up to be one of the cornerstones of organic agriculture in the Northeast for another thirty years at least. While there are very likely some folks who have grown smaller plots of edible lentils in smaller plots or home gardens, these are the folks that have brought the first commercially available crop of lentils to the Northeast. We hope you enjoy them, as they almost instantly sold out the first year they grew them. They have since scaled up their planting and hopefully Northeast-grown lentils will be more regularly available from here on out.

It would be well worth your while to cook these simply with water and salt and do a comparison to other lentils you may have in your pantry. If you are game for a project however, you could also take some and try tossing them in as the protein (in place of tofu) in the Indonesian speciality [Gado Gado](#), which has countless variations once you start digging into it.

Mayocoba Beans (P. Vulgaris)
Carlson-Arbogast Farms, MI



Here is yet one more beautiful and delicious bean from Peru. These beans (like seemingly every other bean) go by many names. Whatever you call them Mayacoba or Mayocoba, Peruano or Canario, or even Sulfur Bean, I think you will be enamored with these. This particular batch was also grown in Central Michigan by Carlson-Arbogast Farm. This family farm has been growing beans for more than 140 years. These beans are a comparatively thinner-skinned bean with a soft body that makes them very much at home in any recipe where a pinto bean would be called for, especially creamy refried beans.

Building on the theme of making a big pot of beans on Sundays for the week ahead, here's a few ideas of what to do with the quart container of cooked Mayocoba beans you'd yield from cooking the 1 lb bag in this Box.

Cook the beans simply with 1 teaspoon of salt and 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Once done ladle into a 1 quart container and cool. Because these are a thinner-skinned bean they make an incredible starchy broth, but can get lost in the sauce a bit as well. If you wish for them to hold their shape better for your preparations, add the juice of half a lemon, or 1 tablespoon of cider vinegar to your cooked beans. Keep this quart in the fridge for up to six days or freeze.

When I want to make a meal from a container of mayocoba, I'll pull one cup aside and spread them atop a mini sheet pan of nachos that I'll cook off in my toaster oven so that I have some to snack on while I simmer the rest down into [refried beans](#) to spread on top of [tostadas](#) with crunchy slaw, radishes, or curtido for a first course, and then roll up the balance of the refried beans with rice and whatever apropos fixings I have in the fridge for a burrito. That quart container should furnish enough beans to feed a family of four nachos, tostadas, and burritos, or else a few tacos each.

Golden Rice
Marsh Hen Mill, SC (Oryza Sativa)



"Words cannot cook rice" is a proverb I appreciate and lean on. There's talking and there's doing, and not all doing is created equal.

I don't know how much time you've spent with rice, but I'm nearly as humbled and inspired by rice as I am with beans. There are so many different varieties that can be processed so many different ways, that all need a slightly different treatment when being cooked, and that co-evolved with distinct cultures cuisines around the globe.

The rice included here is not the Wild Rice native to what is now called the Western Hemisphere. There are four species in the genus *Zizania*, three of which are native to North America. The rice we typically eat these days was introduced during the Transatlantic Slave Trade when expert agriculturists from West Africa were stolen to the mid-Atlantic colonies. The story of how rice (*Oryza sativa*) found its way to the "Rice Coast" of the Carolinas is a fraught one. [Here is an interview](#) with food historian Michael Twitty that digs into it a little bit, while laying the ground work for a discussion on the entire book he wrote centered on rice a couple of years ago.

I think it's really important we learn the stories of the crops we rely on. Their seeds and the people who tended and still-tend those seeds. I think it's important to try to learn how they prepared these foods, and why. And how those culinary preparations informed why they selected for this or that quality as much as agronomic considerations (think Jasmine versus Basmati rice; short grain versus long grain as examples). Since words cannot cook rice, we can only hone the craft one pot at a time. Here are two rice recipes that attempt to honor the historic food that is Carolina Gold Rice. Serve with any of the legumes you have ☺
[Marsh Hen Mill's Recipe](#)
[Anson Mill's Recipe](#)