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Bean Box Goods October 2024

Between the ever-changing and constant needs brought on by parenthood and those of being a small business owner I've struggling to find time to prioritize the needs brought on by being a human a good chunk of this past year. I don't think I'm alone in this. For all the incredible good fortune I have in terms of access to fresh food and dry beans, our family's been leaning on some frozen foods and even *gasp* (just kidding!) canned beans here in there amidst midweek burn-out.

My old pattern and ongoing intention is to cook off a pot of beans every Sunday for the week ahead. When I'm uninspired, or too muddle-headed to engage with or think through following a recipe, I have a default preparation that works with pretty much every bean. There are plenty of tweaks one could make to enhance this beyond what I'm sharing, but from one burnt out person to another, here's my nearly universal weekly bean pot baseline, that will take care of at least eight servings for the week ahead:

1 lb of dry beans with about twice their volume in water
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon dulse flakes (or a piece of kombu)
1 tablespoon of olive oil
1-2 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 teaspoons sea salt

From their constant usage, I have all of these spices at the front of my spice cabinet shelf, which is more or less organized from front to back according to frequency of use. Depending on my mood, what's

coming out of the garden, the time of year, etc I may sub or add a teaspoon of paprika, some ginger...follow your personal affinities. Just know for most ad hoc seasonings, you won't want to go over a cumulative tablespoon. That's why I end up adding 1 tablespoon of three different ingredients: there are three teaspoons in a tablespoon.

One pound of beans will turn into about 2 lbs of cooked beans. Most folks will feel satiated by four ounces of beans—some more, some less. All to say, you can count on around 8 servings from one such pot of pure beans. If you do the math, you get to see the value of this Bean Box coming in at under \$1.50 per serving. Not too shabby. If you bulk it up with diced potatoes, carrots, onions, celery and such, you can stretch those servings as much as two-fold if your pot ends up 50/50 beans to vegetables, or meat for that matter.

Just for some context on how a Sunday Pot can play out in simple meals throughout the week: if you cooked off a pot of the black tepary beans included in this month's box, you could put a couple spoonfuls over some eggs with wilted greens and hot sauce for breakfast Monday, tuck them in some quesadillas Tuesday, top off some nachos Wednesday, round out a vegetable and grain bowl for dinner Thursday, roll them in some burritos Friday, and add them to a stuffed delicata on Saturday to have a clean slate for your next Sunday pot.

For more bean inspiration, I've plugged them before, but Serious Eats editor Daniel Gritzer has done a good job of consolidating a lot of questions and compiling the nuances of soaking (or not), when to salt, cooking stovetop and in the oven. Here's that worthy [primer](#).

They have a number of great deeper dives, including [this one](#) on salting I recommend checking out. You can find out how adding 1 tablespoon of salt per quart of soaking water can help the beans expand with less rupturing to their skins due ion exchanges.

In this Box

Organic Dark Red Kidney Beans – Martens' Farm NY
Organic Black Tepary Beans – Ramona Farms, AZ
Organic Petite Crimson Lentils – Timeless Foods, MT
Pinto Beans – Callan Farms, NY
Organic Red Beans – Morningstar Farms, VT

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

Kidney Beans
Martens' Farm, NY



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. These are their kidney beans.

I don't think these beans need any introduction. A classic in bean salads in the summer and warming chili pots in the winter, we are all pretty well-acquainted with kidney beans. What you may not know is that there are literally *thousands* of distinct cultivars of kidney beans. Nutritional content can vary a bit from one type of bean to the next, but kidney beans overall offer a heap of protein, folate, iron, and phosphorous, but are also offer a range of trace minerals including zinc, which is important in metabolizing Vitamin C for a healthy immune system.

These are a great go-to in chili of course, but I don't think you likely need one more chili recipe. Instead, I'll suggest one of the large number of great kidney bean recipes available in Indian cuisine, where they are called "Rajma". Here is one recipe for a [Rajma masala](#), and here is a truly charming video of a mother-son kitchen duet making Punjabi [Rajma Chawal](#) with the full recipe in the video's description.

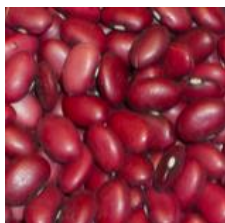
Pinto Beans
Callan Farm, Caledonia NY



Pintos get their name from their speckled "painted" appearance that fades when cooked. *Pintar* means to paint in Spanish. They are many people's go-to bean for refried beans, and rightly so. They are great in that context and we've shared recipes for refritos before. This time around I'm hoping you'll give Sopa Tarasca a try. Here is a link to a [recipe](#) for this traditional Michoacán soup. And here is a link to a [great video tutorial](#) from the wonderful series, "Así se Cocina en el Rancho"

These pintos have been grown and cleaned by the Callan family in the Finger Lakes region of NY, a great bean growing region. The Callans are now in their third generation of commercial bean growing and they also offer bean cleaning to other farmers throughout the Northeast. To me, they are unsung heroes of the Northeast food shed.

Red Merlot Beans
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.

Merlot beans came out of a breeding program between the USDA and Michigan State University in the early 2000's.

They are purportedly the first of this class of "small red" beans to have their more-upright growth habit, less vining, etc. All things that make mechanical harvesting easier. Importantly, they also demonstrated resistant to bean rust and bean common mosaic virus.

[Here is a recipe](#) for one such soup I made subbing the Red Merlot for white beans and combining them with the first sweet potatoes of the season up here. It's an Instant Pot recipe, but it works just as well in a slow cooker or in a long simmer on the stove in any old pot with a lid.

I also like taking these beans (honestly, any beans, really) and crushing them with a fork over some well-buttered toast with a squeeze of fresh lemon and pinch of salt in the morning for an avocado toast on a budget.

Cannellini Beans
Carlson-Arbogast Farms, 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 and work very well in a locro stew (as do lima beans). These are from a family farm in Central Michigan called Carlson-Arbogast Farms. 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. Here's one idea of what to do with them.

Peoples' Pesto

1-2 hours, 12 servings

Ingredients

1 lb (2 cups) dry cannellini beans
2 bunches basil (about 2 cups chopped)
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley (about 1 cup chopped)
2 cups olive oil
½ cup toasted sunflower seeds
1 teaspoons garlic powder
2 tablespoons sea salt
1 tablespoon white pepper
1 lemon's juice

First, cook up your beans. To simplify these recipes we've put some of our rules of thumb on cooking beans at vermontbeancrafters.com/dry-beans Coarsely chop your fresh herbs and then combine with the rest of ingredients. If you have a food processor, that'll make quick work of it all. A mortar and pestle also do a good job. I recommend browning the sunflower seeds first. Cook them a minute or two on medium-heat, stirring them often until they begin to brown and become aromatic. Remove from the heat before they begin to smoke. Cool before adding. Toss the pesto into the beans.

They are good to go as is, but also can become a main course if spooned on top of polenta or grits.

**Black Tepary Bean (*Phaseolus acutifolius*)
Ramona Farms, AZ**



Tepary beans are on another level. They are distinct from most any other beans you've cooked with. They are a different species from 'common beans' (*p. vulgaris*), lima beans (*p. lunatus*), and 'runner beans' (*p. coccineus*). They are incredibly diverse and grow in at least forty-six distinct colors. They have deep roots going back thousands of years throughout the arid Southwest and through what is now referred to as Central America and at times making up to 49% of the dietary protein of the indigenous communities that cultivated them. In the early 1900's there were millions of pounds being grown by indigenous farmers in the Southwest, though those numbers waned over time due to a range of colonial pressures.

While tepary bean acreage and use had decreased through the mid-1900s, these beans and the agriculture systems they rely on have persisted and are on the rise. Ramona Button is the Akimel O'Odham farmer behind Ramona Farms, where these tepary beans were sourced from. Their quality is impeccable and we are grateful and fortunate that they are making these beans available to us all.

In Ramona Farms' own words:

"Tasty, easy to digest and probably the healthiest bean on the planet, the tepary bean is native to the Sonoran desert. Tepary beans have more protein and higher fiber than ordinary beans and a lower glycemic index (41-44) so they are a great energy food for dieters and diabetics."

In preparing these beans you will find that you will absolutely want to cook them 'low and slow'. While that's a good rule of thumb for all beans, some other bean varieties do okay on higher heat and comparatively faster cooks. Tepary beans on the other hand really come into their own if cooked at a low simmer for several hours. These are a good one to break out a crock pot or Instant Pot, or else a clay pot in your oven for a good chunk of the day.

Once cooked you'll find a deep savory almost 'meatiness' in the beans themselves, and a rich, satiating stock in the water they've been cooked in. Their texture remains distinct from the soft-starched seed bodies of

black beans and the like, and I for one am a big fan. The following recipe is from Ramona Farms:

Traditional Poshol- 6 hours

With 1 lb dry tepary beans this yields 8 large servings.

Ingredients

1 lb dry black tepary beans (2 lbs cooked weight)
1/3 cup whole wheat berries/kernels
1/4 cup dry roasted sweet corn or white corn (optional)
1/2 yellow onion (quartered or diced)
1 clove garlic (optional)
1/8th tsp of cumin (two pinches)
2 dried chile peppers (whole)
1/4 lb bacon fried and crumbled (optional)

Rinse your 1 lb of black tepary beans and add water to cover, plus two to four inches. Bring all ingredients to a rapid boil for 30 minutes. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for up to six hours (or until tender). Great when cooked in a crock pot! Recipe courtesy of Ramona Button.

**Petite Crimson Lentils
Timeless Foods, MT**



For newcomers: the Timeless growers are featured in the great book, [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.

Lentils, though a different genus and species from common beans and are grown in distinct regions. Nonetheless, lentils are likewise nutritional powerhouses. They are 25% protein and offer up a meaningful amount of iron, folate, zinc and fiber. There is a full run-down of their nutritional benefits available [here](#) and a comparison of the nutritional profile of lentils relative to chickpeas [here](#).

Trying making [this hummus](#) with these crimson lentils in place of chickpeas for a bean spread that is comparatively higher in protein, iron, and B vitamins.