VERMONT BEAN CRAFTERS

NOURISHING SINCE 2009

Bean Box Goods
Autumn 2026

"Supposing is good, finding out is better."
-Mark Twain

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The Fall Bean Box is an exciting one. Around this time the year's harvests are beginning to come in from the fields, but they generally aren't fully harvested, dried, and cleaned until the winter edition. So we find ourselves at the point where we can see what exciting new varieties we may be able to offer in the year ahead, and also come to terms with any fields that didn't quite turn out the way we hoped. As I write this, I'm looking forward to the dry weather forecasted for next week as I wince at the constant rain this week, waiting for our field of Good Mother Stallard beans to dry down at our home farm here in Warren, VT. Earlier today I had been coordinating with a bean grower farming a black bean crop for us in the St Albans area of VT. The rain is affecting them too and I will spend some time driving our mobile dryer to them for their ten-acre plot. I also need to find time to bring our mobile thresher to a much smaller farm who recently hand-harvested their half-acre of Flambo beans.



The old Bob's 44 Bean Combine being towed to a neighbor's bean field this Fall.

For more than a decade now I've been operating a sort of Equipment Commons, raising grant funds to purchase specialized dry bean cleaning equipment to help remove bottlenecks and roadblocks for farmers interested in growing beans and small grains at a small and medium scale in the Northeast. We don't charge anything for the service, we just know how hard it is to do this all, and we want to live in a world where these

beans are being grown, seeds are being saved, and neighbors are feeding neighbors free of the fraughtness of the larger consolidated food system. We are actively trying to find out if a better way of going about feeding our neighbors is possible with a model collaboration in place of competition.

It's in this spirit that we are putting the finishing touches on our Beanery Barn. This project is akin to trading the family cow for a handful of beans. It seems crazy from the outside, but I'm confident it will lead us into a magical world of abundance. It's been three years of planning, fundraising and layers of intense physical laboring to put together a world-class bean cleaning facility in what was an old dairy barn from the early 1900's that had fallen into disrepair on the farm. Just last October we cleaned out generations of junk and detritus and hired some friends to jack it up off its old inadequate foundation with no frost protection. The lower 30 inches of exterior walls were cut off, a proper frost-protected footing and stem wall were put in, and the barn was set back down on its new foundation plumb and square for the first time in a generation or two. We provisioned to raise the interior elevation of the barn about two feet relative to where it was resting in the landscape before. This got everything out of the 100 year flood plain. Climate resilience is a central decision making lens we are always working through. It's why we do what we do, but also informs the how and the where of that 'why'. The last sections of concrete were poured this week, electrical and new siding happens over the next week, and we are on track to be able to process the 2026 harvests through our new facility before the end of the year. It's a big moment for us, sixteen years into this adventure. It's nothing short of bonkers to reflect on everything that has gone into being able to bring a simple pot of beans to your stove top in this box every few months. We hope you and yours enjoy the magical fruits of our labors.

On to the Bean Box!

As ever, if you've found any great such resources (printed or digital) please feel free to share them with me at joe@vermontbeancrafters.com

To start, here's a repeat link to a worthy primer on cooking with beans.

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

In this Box

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Organic Red Merlot Beans, Martens Farm, NY
Organic Black Butte Chickpeas, Timeless Foods, MT
Organic Pinto Beans, Morningstar Farms, VT
Organic Seven Bean Mix, Morningstar, VT
Organic French Green Lentils, Timeless Foods, MT
Organic Ruby Red Pop Corn, Hurricane Flats, VT

Org Red Merlot Beans (P. Vulgaris)
Martens Farm, NY



Red beans are a class of beans versus a specific cultivar. At different points we stock rojo chiquito, red merlot, and even 'volcano'! They have subtly different agronomic features for farmers, and nuanced culinary distinctions for cooks and eaters. Included in this shipment are Red Merlot, which is a fairly recent release, circa 2005, that was the result of a collaboration between the USDA and Michigan State University, where a lot of bean breeding work goes down. They were able to cross two distinct red bean varieties to end up with one with much-improved disease resistance and an upright growing habit, which is very important for machine harvesting, and keeping pods off the soil to avoid molds and diseases. The other quality they selected for is 'good canning quality' which for the home cook translates to a bean that holds its shape and retains its color well.

A friend of mine is a James Beard nominated chef who runs a Dominican inspired restaurant in Vermont. They use these beans as their bean throughout their menu. I'm recommending folks try out cooking these beans in the spirt of that cuisine. Here is a recipe that includes the classic annato/achiote seasoning, along with the inclusion of winter squash, which should be landing on folks' counters about now. These beans don't need to be pre-soaked before cooking. You can simply give a quick rinse with cold water, and then top of your pot with hot water to save on some cooking time. Remember they will double in size, absorbing the water added, so keep an eye on them and make sure there is a ½" to 1" layer of water over the beans so they cook evenly.

These beans were grown by Hanna and Peter Martens. They are the next generation on the land of Lakeview Organic Grains, now being run as Seneca Grain and Bean in the eastern Finger Lakes Region of NY.

Org Black Butte Chickpeas (Cicer Arietenum)
Timeless, MT - Big B Boxes Only



These are one more distinct offering coming from the farmers that collaborate with Timeless Foods. It is a type of desi chickpea, which is more common in India, versus the kabuli chickpea, which is more common in the more temperate climates around the Mediterranean.
We have partnered with Timeless since our first Bean Box shipment over five years ago since they specialize in varieties that aren't well-suited for New England's climate. They have a similar mission centered on human and ecological health and it feels like a real gift to be able to have these in stock to share with people. I've plugged it before, but it's definitely worth adding the Lentil Underground to your book list if you haven't yet checked it out. It chronicles the journey of Timeless bringing these soil-building, human-nourishing crops to a part of Montana previously dominated by conventional wheat monocrops.

Black Butte Chickpeas are what Timeless calls these, though they are more commonly called kala chana the world over. You can treat these as you would a 'regular' chickpea and make a gorgeously-hued hummus, grain salad, or simply pair them with rice or a flatbread of your choice. I'll cook a pot on Sundays, and have them ready to top off a sheet pan of roasted root vegetables, add substance to a stir fry, or simply spoon over some schmears of labneh and olive oil to pick up with torn pieces of pita or naan. Their taste and texture are borderline addictive. Naan is one of the quickest and easiest breads you can make, and it's always orders of magnitude better made fresh versus store-bought. If you want truly satisfying accoutrement to these, I strongly recommend whipping up some labneh and fresh naan.

Organic Pinto Beans (P. Vulgaris)
Martens Farm, NY



The name pinto is derived from *pintar* or 'to paint' due to the brush-stroke-like patterns on this bean's seedcoat. It's subtle and gorgeous. It can be more pronounced or subdued depending on how much rain there was in a given season, but in all cases the coloring blanches out to a light tan-pink once cooked. This is possibly just behind black beans and chickpeas as the most sought-after bean in the Northeast these days. You'd be hard-pressed to find a grocery store or Mexican restaurant that doesn't have them on the menu. That's partly why it's so great to put this VT-grown organic pinto option in this box. Sourcing from small farms versus national brands really helps show how process matters and not all beans are created equal. Putting aside the fact that there are dozens of distinct cultivars of pinto beans, small farms like Morningstar in Glover, VT sell out of their inventory each year, meaning there are no commodity beans aging out in warehouses and distribution centers before they find their way to you. They will cook noticeably faster as a result.

Most folks don't realize, but broad-spectrum herbicides like glyphosate are sprayed multiple times throughout the growing season on conventional commodity bean farms, including right before harvest to kill back weeds and help the beans dry down for even threshing. Though this practice is now in decline in Canada due to public health concerns, that is not the case in the United States to-date. One more reason why we primarily source organic beans from smaller farms. The 'how' can matter as much as the 'what' we eat.

With that little tangent out of the way, might I suggest trying your hand at making pozole as the weather takes its turn to soup season (this soup is also spelled 'posole' by some)? It's a favorite over here both at home and at staff lunch. In a recipe like this, I simply sub the cooked pintos for the pork. Or keep the pork and add the beans too if that's your jam. No shame in using canned hominy.

If you would like to try an alternative, you could either buy whole kernel dent corn and nixtamalize it yourself. Masienda has a great short video of how to, and also sells all the things you would need to follow-through on the ambition! You can also check out the products from Corn Mafia, a high quality, small-batch operation run by Mohawk chef Dave Smoke McCluskey

Organic Seven Bean Mix (P. Vulgaris)



Not sure which bean to cook? Why not all of them!? Seth and Jeanette have grown their farm over the years from just a few acres to dozens, and now they are leasing hundreds of acres for everything from dry beans to hay, grain crops to sunflowers for oil. They are a truly impressive family. Across the dozen-plus acres of dry beans they grow, they are cultivating a half-dozen or more distinct varieties of beans. They put of these together in the mix. Though many of the colors of the beans won't be quite so pronounced after simmering, they do all lend a slightly different texture and taste to a stew or chili. Different beans have different ratios of soft and hard starches, and it's enjoyable to have a bowl of something that's not monolithic in texture.

With Halloween around the corner, maybe you could give some little baggies of these out as a 'trick' option alongside the treats, with a little note that they need to be boiled in a potion before enjoyed.

Org French Green Lentils (Lens Culinaris)



These French Green Lentils, aka lentils du Puy, are also sourced from Timeless, as featured in the Lentil Underground. These lentils are my go-to for dahl. They are good in any context that lentils are at home, and my other favorite way to eat them is simply paired with rice. We do a family-style staff meal at our commercial kitchen and farm, and this time of year we eat lentils a couple of times each week. They are so simple, quick and satiating. If cooked low and slow, these hold their shape and have a satisfying texture, more so than most

other lentils, making them ideal for salads, grain bowls, or stuffing a roasted squash with.

Christopher Kimball does a deep dive on them here on Milk Street's website. And 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.

Conv Golden Rice (Oryza Sativa)
Marsh Hen, SC - BIG ONLY



This offering is only included in Big B Bean Boxes this time around. Though, you can order it a la carte off our online store if you're interested. Not to be confused with 'golden rice' which was a GMO rice developed to contain greater beta-carotene concentrations for areas experiencing specific nutritional deficiencies, Carolina Gold Rice is a variety of oryza sativa that was established as a staple food of the Carolina Lowcountry thanks to the expertise and labor of the enslaved agriculturalists from Western Africa.

Dating back to the 1700's, there were years when more than half of the rice being commercially-grown in the early United States was this variety, though by the 1920's it had faded from popular consumption. A brand called 'Carolina Gold' persists, but it uses a different cultivar. Through a handful of champions in the last quarter of the 20th century it made a come-back, Clemson University was able to make some more disease-resistant selections and through the work of Anson Mills and others the variety is still around and gaining popularity in foodie circles through to present.

This rice will be great with any of the legumes in this shipment. I will add it to burritos with refried pinto beans, ladle it on plates beside Red Merlot beans for red beans and rice, or bolster a lentil stew with a scoop of this rice and dollop of greek yogurt. To taste the difference of this rice compared to others, I recommend keeping it simple. Here's a straight-forward preparation from John and the team at Marsh Hen on Editso Island themselves.