



Bean Box Goods
Autumn 2025

"Beans are really simple, but we insist on making them complicated."
-Confucius (misquoted)

Springtime is equal parts looking ahead and reflecting back on past years. As the snow melts and trees' blossoms swell to bursting, we have to anticipate everything we may need in the way of for beans to get us through 2027. We analyze the preceding year's sales and trends and combine that with our aspirations and best guesses for the year(s) ahead.

Beans get planted in May and June, harvested in October and November, and then dried and cleaned, ready to sell in early 2027. There is at least a nine-month lag time between 2026 harvest needs to last us until then!). We only get one chance to ensure an adequate inventory for our future selves. And while we always aim to maintain a strategic buffer that allows for growth, we know crop failures happen on the one hand, and that we can only cashflow so much inventory on the other.

We have seen some years where we had a relatively hard time moving varieties like marafax and soldier beans, only to find the following year there would be some leap in popularity and we'd sell out midyear, struggling to find sufficient seed to plant for the ensuing year. There's also never a guarantee that hype would still be there by the next harvest.

This is all to say, while we wholesale beans through distributors to restaurants grocery stores around the Northeast, this Bean Box subscription program is one of our favorite ways to get beans to people. It offers us a deeper connection to passionate people that allow us

to plan around a baseline consistent demand, making growing a bean business less like reading tea leaves to divine the future. With that all in mind, in 2026 we will be working with a couple of new growers in VT and NY to increase the volume and diversity of our offerings, while bulking up the volume of seed of certain rarer beans at our home farm in Warren, VT.

Thank you for coming along with us in pursuit of these bean dreams.



Here is a picture from inside the century-old dairy barn we are restoring and turning into a world-class seed cleaning facility in service of the Northeast bean and grain economy.

With a mix of grants and debt we have raised the barn, put it on a new foundation, brought it up out of the 100-year floodplain, and prepared a new interior slab that will enable us to store more beans than ever. We are also upgrading the electrical service to run all the specialized equipment that enables us to make the beans pristine and safe for human consumption after harvest, eliminating any rocks and stover that may have ended up mixed with the beans after mechanical harvesting. We will eventually have a farmstand, café, and bean emporium set up in the Beanery, so stay tuned and hope you can come visit when it's all done!

-Joe and Team Bean

In this Box

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Organic Southwest Gold, Morningstar Farms, VT
Cranberry/Borlotti Beans, Carlson-Arbogast, MI
Organic Black Beans, Martens Farm, NY
Organic Adzuki Beans, Martens Farm, NY
Organic Spanish Brown Lentils, Timeless, MT
Organic Black Tepary Beans, Ramona Farms, AZ

Org. Southwest Gold Beans



We've been working with Seth and Jeanette at Morningstar Farms for over a decade now. Their kids we met as babies are now teenagers and their farm has grown incredibly in terms of acreage, infrastructure, and complexity. They grow beans as part of a rotation with hay, sunflower seeds they press into oil, grain crops they mill into flour with their own stone mill. It's an impressive operation!

This is the first year they've grown Southwest Gold. This bean is an improved variety of Zuni Gold, bred to have improved disease resistance and higher yields while maintaining the beautiful colorations and culinary quality of the beans' parentage, which is an heirloom in the Slow Food Ark of Taste, long-grown by the Zuni people of the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

Seeing and tasting these beans made me think of a meal I had years ago at Marlow and Daughters in Brooklyn, with some Jacob's Cattle beans they had purchased through the Great Northeast Bean Exchange we had coordinated at the New Amsterdam Market, which we used to attend in the early days of Bean Crafters. That whole event is a story for another day, but the meal I'm recommending for these beans from the ghost of that memory is a bowl of creamy, cheesy grits, topped with Southwest Gold bean that have been simmered until tender with just salt, olive oil, a touch of smoked paprika and cumin. Wilt some spinach into the broth once the beans are tender enough to crush against the roof of your mouth with your tongue. A dollop of pickled red onions or kimchi will tie together all the other starchy, fatty, savory notes.

A note on bean breeding: we've seen first-hand how some of the heirlooms we love can 'underperform' in garden and farm contexts. A lot of people end up collecting bean varieties instead of working with them. Beans, like all crops, require constant vigilance in the fields to highlight stand-out vigorous plants, to rogue out sickly plants, and to select for individual plants in populations that are less-susceptible to drought stress

and/or the many diseases that can affect them (Halo Blight, Common Bean Mosaic Virus, Anthracnose, etc). Over generations, bean breeders make selections that improve yields, encourage more upright growth habits to make harvest easier, and reduce the impacts of disease pressures. Traditional plant breeders have been doing this forever, and still do this work today.

While beans have "perfect flowers" and are largely self-fertile, it is possible to make hybrids with two different parent lines to facilitate these improvements. I was speaking with a bean breeder at a conference over this past winter, and, in a contemporary university context it can take at least five years and over \$100,000 to develop an improved bean variety. It takes years to see how the selections do against different disease and environmental pressures, and to ensure those traits are stable in subsequent generations of the variety. UC Davis was behind Zuni Gold and does a lot of this work. Michigan State University is a leader in this work as well. There are also untold hundreds of independent grower-breeders around this world doing their part in improving the quality of bean varieties. With the wild weather of the changing climate, we need a diversity of grower-breeders working with a wide range beans.

Cranberry/Borlotti Beans



I have a feeling that if you are enough of a bean geek to subscribe to our Bean Box, there's a decent chance you know who Alison Roman is. She's made recipes for Bon Appetit, New York Times Cooking, and written some cookbooks. I like the narrative style and recipe content of her [newsletter](#). I think it's no coincidence that some of her most popular recipes are bean-centric. Brothy Chickpeas with Calabrian Chili. Beans with Beans. Brothy Beans. Caramelized Beans with Tomato and Cabbage. I rest my case.

Cranberry beans are one of the better soup beans IMHO as their thin skins and softer, starchy body lends substance and starch to a broth. They're my go-to for Pasta Fagioli, and my recommendation for: [Brothy Beans](#) which I recommend wilting greens into.

Organic Black Beans



I love black beans. Love. Them. Black beans are like pizza. Even bad ones (aka canned ☺) are still good. I had dinner at a Tex Mex restaurant recently and it was obvious the beans were from a can and kept in a steam table for hours. They were decently seasoned though, and perfectly adequate. No shade to be thrown. I can have high standards and still enjoy a utilitarian meal. I don't know how many people these days can tell the difference between canned beans or not, but if you are ordering these Bean Boxes you just might! I'd recommend trying a blind taste test with you and some friends of our beans and their canned equivalents. It's worth trying our beans versus national brands of dry beans for that matter. There is a really a difference in taste, texture, even aroma.

I've shared a number of different recipes for black beans before and there is certainly no shortage of them [online](#) and in innumerable cookbooks. Here's one of the simplest approaches to them that let's them stand on their own two feet. I use this for staff meals at work or weekend meal prep for the week ahead at home.

Our black beans don't need to be presoaked, but I recommend giving all beans a rinse with cold water before cooking. After rinsing, fill a pot with twice the beans' volume in water and one teaspoon of sea salt (we use Redmonds Real Salt for those trace minerals!), one glug of olive oil, 1 teaspoon of seaweed flakes (wakame, sugar kelp or dulse), a pinch of cumin and a few crushed chiltepins (sub with crushed red pepper if you don't stock this Sonoran staple). Bring the pot to a high boil and then reduce to a simmer and cover with the lid slightly ajar. You can also pop this in an Instant Pot for 20 minutes of high-pressure cooking. In either scenario you will be ready to eat in about an hour from the start. We use these beans in simple rice, bean, veg bowls, burritos, or as the base of black bean soup on subsequent days if we cooked enough. That's what I love about this simple, fairly neutral approach.

Organic Adzuki Beans



This lot of Adzuki beans is the first harvest of NY-grown organic ones we've been able to source. Prior to the Martens' Farm growing these this past season, the closest source we had was Michigan. These beans are hugely important globally, but fairly uncommon in the Northeastern US.

For those unfamiliar with them, I recommend cooking them in dishes where you would use black eyed peas or cowpeas, which are of the same botanical genus, *vigna*. Black eyed peas are *vigna unguiculata*. Adzuki beans are *vigna angularis*. They are similar to mung beans, which are *vigna radiata*. That may feel wonky and irrelevant, but I've found knowing the genus is helpful in knowing how to cook a bean (and any food item in general).

Vignas can all be cooked similarly, and also make the best sprouts. *Phaseolus vulgaris*, or 'common beans' like black beans and pintos can all be prepared similarly. And the larger-bodied, often-vining, lima beans are *Phaseolus lunatus*. *Lunatus* are a species of beans I highly recommend presoaking in salted water for even cooking. Pre-soaking isn't as important for common beans. Tepary beans, as you'll see below, also benefit from a distinct cooking regiment. They are *Phaseolus acutifolius*. Not to belabor the point ☺

Adzuki are the bean in [my favorite miso](#). And they play the starring role in these crazy simple [brownie recipe](#). Offering a lower glycemic index way to bring chocolate into your life. These brownies are a fitting application as adzuki beans play the starring role in many desserts alongside mochi as [anko](#), or red bean paste.

Adzuki have a subtle nutty flavor and creamy texture that shines in simple preparations like with steamed vegetables and rice. Those same qualities have them at-home as the protein in curries, such as [this one](#).

Organic Pardina/Spanish Brown Lentils



These also go by Pardina Lentils, and are central in lentejas, a stew that is one of the national dishes of Spain. Some recipes add ham or chorizo, but if you don't participate in meat, smoked paprika checks a lot of the flavor boxes those meats otherwise would impart in the broth. Here's a [traditional recipe](#), and here's a [vegetarian one](#).

I love lentils for how quick and easy they are to prepare. No presoaking, and ready in 20-30 minutes without any pressure cooking. This plays into what we were saying before about how the genus can tell you a lot about how to prepare them. Lentils' botanical binomial is 'lens culinaris'.

For a more free-form meal idea, I generally like to eat lentils with a 1:1:1 ratio of one part lentils to one part grain and one part roasted vegetables. These ad hoc meals get rounded out with fresh herbs like mint, dill, parsley and with a dollop of Greek yogurt or labneh or sour cream. Toasted sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, gomasio or buckwheat groats get sprinkled on for texture.

Organic Black Tepary Beans, Ramona Farms, AZ



Tepary beans have been selected from wild populations in the Sonoran Desert by the Akimel O'odham and Tohono O'odham for countless generations. They are a distinct species from 'common beans' like black beans and pintos. Their growing habit, taste and texture are distinct. They have higher than average protein and are the embodiment of 'let food be thy medicine'. Known as S-Chuuk Bavi, these beans are sourced from Ramona Farms, where Ramona Button grows hundreds of acres of beans and grains on their ancestral lands.

If this is your first time eating tepary beans, I recommend the simplest preparation so you can taste and appreciate them on their own. Then go ahead and integrate them into burritos, grain bowls, chili... wherever you might think to use black beans. They do take a bit longer to cook and do have a denser texture than other beans, but they should still not be chalky once properly cooked. Here is the recommended cooking method of tepary beans from Ramona Farm themselves:

Place beans in a pot with 2 quarts water, bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and soak for 2 hours. Pour off soaking water, rinse beans and add 2 quarts fresh water. Bring pot to a boil and reduce heat to simmer. Partially cover the pot and cook beans until tender (approximately 6 to 8 hours). Or place in large crock pot on **HIGH** for 8-10 hours. Add **HOT** water as needed. Salt to taste (**after cooking**). Serves four people. Rule of Thumb: if you can't smell them they are not done.

Of all beans, I think these are the best candidate for a pressure cooker or Instant Pot -wash, sort, soak as instructed above. Set Pressure Cooker to High and cook for 45 - 60 minutes.