

[Toggle menu](#) [#off-screen-nav]

## How To Cook Beans on the Stove

Cooking Lessons from The Kitchn

[<http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717>]

[Print recipe](#) [Jump to the recipe](#) [#recipe]

It's easy to make beans on the stove — you just need a pot and a free afternoon.

If you've avoided cooking beans at home because you've heard that they are troublesome, finicky, or complicated, it's time to leave that behind. Cooking beans is no more bother than filling a pot of water and letting it simmer happily on the back burner all afternoon. In fact, that's basically all it is. Ignore the naysayers; it's time to cook some tasty, creamy, totally tender beans at home.

The biggest thing to realize about beans is that **they take time**. Once they're on the stove and simmering, it can take anywhere from an hour to three hours (and occasionally longer) for them to become tender. There's no predicting it. The age of your beans, variety, and size can all affect the cooking time.

Don't try to rush things by increasing the temperature under the pot; that just roughs up the outside of the beans and makes mushy before cooked through. Likewise, don't think that you've done something wrong if your beans are still crunchy after a few hours of cooking. I've found that some beans can go from crunchy to creamy in the space of fifteen minutes, right when I thought all was lost. If you're ever in doubt, just keep simmering. (FYI, garbanzo beans are particularly notorious for taking *forever* to become tender.)

The solution? Be patient. Make sure you're cooking beans on an afternoon when you'll be at home anyway and can be relaxing on the couch while your beans putter away. One pound of dried beans makes about five cups of cooked beans, which is plenty for quick soups, burritos, salads, and other quick meals all week long. They also freeze beautifully, ensuring delicious beans whenever you need them.

**Soak the Beans:** I am a firm believer in soaking the beans if you have the time. It does help trim down the cooking time a bit, but even more importantly, pre-soaking helps the beans cook more evenly and become completely tender all the way through.

**Keep the Beans at a Simmer:** Bring the beans to a boil at the very beginning of cooking to bring everything up to temperature, but then you want to keep the beans at a very gentle simmer for the rest of cooking. You should barely see movement in the water. Along with pre-soaking, simmering the beans gently helps them cook evenly until tender, retain their shape without going smoochy, and keep their skins intact.

**Add Salt When Beans Are Just Barely Tender:** Adding the salt at the beginning of cooking can sometimes prevent the starches in the beans from breaking down, so they'll be a little over-firm even after long cooking. The best time to add the salt is when the beans are *almost* finished cooking. When they are tender enough to eat but still too firm to really be enjoyable (aka, al dente), add the salt.

How to Cook Beans on the Stove

*Makes about 5 cups cooked beans*

What You Need

### Ingredients

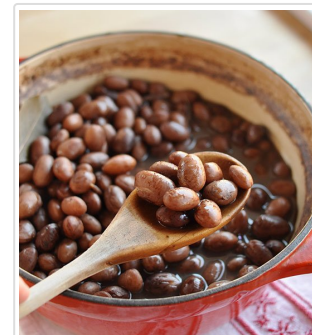
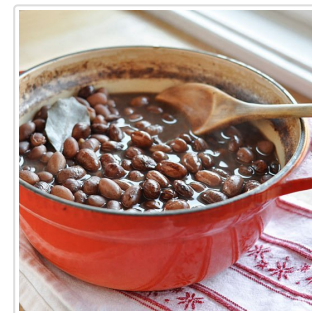
1 pound dried beans, any kind

Water

2-3 teaspoons salt, plus more to taste

Aromatics (optional): bay leaf, 1-2 whole garlic cloves, 1/2 onion, chopped carrots

### Equipment



Medium mixing bowl

4-quart or larger Dutch oven, or another heavy cooking pot with lid

Stirring spoon

#### Instructions

- 1. Soak the beans overnight.** The night before you plan to cook (10-14 hours), soak the beans to reduce cooking time and help them cook more evenly. Empty the dry beans in a bowl. Pick through the beans and discard any shriveled or unappealing beans. Cover the beans with a few inches of water and leave them on the counter.
- 2. Drain the soaked beans.** The next day, the beans will have absorbed much of the water and nearly doubled in size. Drain the beans from their soaking water and rinse them gently under water.
- 3. Transfer beans to a cooking pot.** Transfer the beans to a Dutch oven or other heavy cooking pot. Add the aromatics, if using.
- 4. Bring the beans to a boil.** Cover the beans with an inch of water. Bring them to a boil over medium-high heat.
- 5. Reduce to a simmer and cook.** Once boiling, reduce the heat to low and bring the beans to a very gentle simmer. You should barely see the water moving. Leave the lid off for firm beans meant for cold salads and pasta dishes. Cover the pot with the lid slightly ajar for creamier beans for soups, casseroles, and burritos. (Learn More: Leaving the Lid On Vs. Off When Cooking Beans [<http://www.thekitchn.com/perfectly-cooked-beans-leave-t-96360>])
- 6. Cook the beans.** Cook the beans for one hour, and then begin checking for doneness. Depending on their age, size, and variety, beans can take anywhere from an hour to three hours to cook through. Be patient. Keep the beans a gentle simmer and taste frequently as they start to become tender. Add more water as needed to keep the beans submerged, and stir occasionally.
- 7. Add the salt when beans are just barely tender.** When beans are tender but still too firm to enjoy eating, add the salt. Adding the salt too early can keep the beans from becoming tender. Continue simmering until the beans are as tender and creamy as you like them. Add more salt to taste.
- 8. Cool and store the beans.** Cool the beans in their cooking liquid and transfer to refrigerator containers, still with their cooking liquid. Beans will keep for one week refrigerated or can be frozen for up to three months.

#### Additional Notes:

- **Dry vs. Canned Amounts:** One pound of dry beans makes about five cups of cooked beans, equivalent to about 3 cans of canned beans.
- **Cooking Beans for Soup:** If you intend to use your beans in a soup, it's best to slightly undercook them here and then finish cooking them in the soup itself.
- **The Cooking Liquid:** Don't pour it down the drain! Unlike the slimy liquid from canned beans, this cooking liquid is full of flavor and good nutrients. Once you've scooped up all your beans, this liquid makes a great base for soups and quick sauces.

Show Nutrition

Print recipe

- [high-fiber](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#high-fiber) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#high-fiber>]
- [low-fat](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#low-fat) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#low-fat>]
- [low-fat-abs](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#low-fat-abs) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#low-fat-abs>]
- [sugar-conscious](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#sugar-conscious) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#sugar-conscious>]
- [vegan](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#vegan) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#vegan>]
- [vegetarian](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#vegetarian) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#vegetarian>]
- [dairy-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#dairy-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#dairy-free>]
- [gluten-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#gluten-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#gluten-free>]
- [wheat-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#wheat-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#wheat-free>]
- [egg-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#egg-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#egg-free>]
- [peanut-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#peanut-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#peanut-free>]
- [tree-nut-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#tree-nut-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#tree-nut-free>]
- [soy-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#soy-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#soy-free>]
- [fish-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#fish-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#fish-free>]
- [shellfish-free](http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#shellfish-free) [<http://thekitchn.com/nutritional-glossary#shellfish-free>]

Per serving, based on 4 servings. (% daily value)

Calories  
389  
Fat  
1 g (1.5%)  
Saturated  
0.2 g (1.2%)  
Carbs  
70.5 g (23.5%)  
Fiber  
17.8 g (71.1%)  
Sugars  
2.5 g  
Protein  
27.3 g (54.6%)  
Sodium  
618 mg (25.8%)



nutritional data provided by

[\[https://www.edamam.com/website/wizard.jsp\]](https://www.edamam.com/website/wizard.jsp)

---

Want more smart tutorials for getting things done around the home?  
**See more How To posts** [\[http://www.thekitchn.com/categories/how\\_to\]](http://www.thekitchn.com/categories/how_to)  
We're looking for great examples of your own household intelligence too!  
**Submit your own tutorials or ideas here!** [\[./contact\]](#)

(Images: Emma Christensen [\[http://www.thekitchn.com/thekitchn/author/echristensen\]](http://www.thekitchn.com/thekitchn/author/echristensen) )

## You Might Also Like

### Around the Web

### Categories

Main, Advice, Beans & Lentils, Easy, Freezer Friendly, How To, Keeps Well, Make Ahead, Recipe, Stovetop  
[\[http://thekitchn.com/authors/echristensen\]](http://thekitchn.com/authors/echristensen)

Emma Christensen [\[http://thekitchn.com/authors/echristensen\]](http://thekitchn.com/authors/echristensen)

Emma is the recipe editor for The Kitchn and a graduate of the Cambridge School for Culinary Arts. She is the author of **True Brews** [\[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1607743388/ref=as\\_li\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1607743388&linkCode=as2&tag=emmaelizabethchri-20&linkId=JLTTUHXISZA33HOE\]](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1607743388/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1607743388&linkCode=as2&tag=emmaelizabethchri-20&linkId=JLTTUHXISZA33HOE) and **Brew Better Beer** [\[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/160774631X/ref=as\\_li\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=160774631X&linkCode=as2&tag=emmaelizabethchri-20&linkId=4XY56YRPGUXIPW3A\]](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/160774631X/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=160774631X&linkCode=as2&tag=emmaelizabethchri-20&linkId=4XY56YRPGUXIPW3A) (Spring 2015). Check out her personal blog [\[http://emmaelizabethchristensen.blogspot.com/\]](http://emmaelizabethchristensen.blogspot.com/) for more cooking stories.

- 01.15.13 12:00PM [\[http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717\]](http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717)

---

Please Sign in [\[http://thekitchn.com/sign-in?return\\_to=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thekitchn.com%2Fhow-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717%23comment-form\]](http://thekitchn.com/sign-in?return_to=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thekitchn.com%2Fhow-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717%23comment-form) or Sign up [\[http://thekitchn.com/sign-up?return\\_to=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thekitchn.com%2Fhow-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717%23comment-form\]](http://thekitchn.com/sign-up?return_to=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thekitchn.com%2Fhow-to-cook-beans-on-the-stove-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-182717%23comment-form) to comment.

[\[http://thekitchn.com/tanqueray-no-ten-imperial-shaker-by-jason-crawley-faiths-daily-find-110314-212474\]](http://thekitchn.com/tanqueray-no-ten-imperial-shaker-by-jason-crawley-faiths-daily-find-110314-212474)

Faith's Daily Find [\[http://www.thekitchn.com/categories/daily\\_find\]](http://www.thekitchn.com/categories/daily_find)

1. Tanqueray No. Ten Imperial Shaker by Jason Crawley [\[http://thekitchn.com/tanqueray-no-ten-imperial-shaker-by-jason-crawley-faiths-daily-find-110314-212474\]](http://thekitchn.com/tanqueray-no-ten-imperial-shaker-by-jason-crawley-faiths-daily-find-110314-212474)
2. Cuttlefish Ink Spaccatelli from Sfoglina [\[http://thekitchn.com/cuttlefish-ink-spaccatelli-from-sfoglina-faiths-daily-find-103114-212348\]](http://thekitchn.com/cuttlefish-ink-spaccatelli-from-sfoglina-faiths-daily-find-103114-212348)