



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](#))

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.