

Beans in the Classroom

Making a Bean Seed Necklace

Sprout a bean seed by creating an ideal environment for germination- all you need is a few simple materials.



Materials: small plastic jewelry bag
dry bean (any variety will do)
cotton ball
string (long enough to wear comfortably and remove easily)

Using a hole puncher, create a small hole in the top (above the sealing line) of the jewelry bag. Soak the cotton ball in water, then wring the cotton ball out until it is damp but not soaking. Place the bean seed in the center of the cotton ball. Place the bean and cotton ball in the jewelry bag and seal it tightly. Loop your string through the hole at the top of the jewelry bag and tie it so it fits comfortably around your neck and is long enough to be tucked into a t-shirt.

If you wear your bean seed necklace regularly, the heat from your body will help encourage the bean to sprout. In just a few days you'll see the root of the bean plant emerge, and in less than a week you will have your very own bean sprout to plant!

Did You Know?

- The scientific name for common beans is *Phaseolus vulgaris*,
- Beans are legumes, a class of vegetables which includes beans, peas, and lentils.

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April Harvest of the Month

Dry Beans



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Cooking with Dry Beans

Prep time: overnight soaking
Cook time: ~1 hour
Estimated Cost: <\$1
Serves four as a side dish.

Ingredients:

1 pound dry beans (about 2 cups)

Directions:

It's important to soak dry beans. Soaking reduces cooking time and aids in the digestion of the heavy dose of fiber beans provide. Dry beans will double or triple in size after soaking and cooking, so it's also important to choose a large enough pot when soaking beans.

Start by rinsing the dry beans under cool running water in a colander. Move the beans around with your hand to clear any dust or debris that may be found with the beans.

Place beans in a large pot and pour enough cold water over beans to cover them by at least 2 inches, or three times the amount of water as beans (2 cups beans = 6 cups water for soaking). Soak beans for 8 hours or overnight.

Drain beans and discard soak water. Rinse beans, place in large pot and cover with water. Simmer on medium heat until soft, about an hour (or more depending on the type of bean).

Black beans: 1 1/2 hours **Chickpeas:** 2 1/2 hours **Lentils:** 30 to 40 minutes

Pinto beans: 2 hours **Red beans:** 2 1/4 hours



Bean Buyer's Tip

1 pound dry beans ≈ 2 cups, which becomes about 6 cups cooked. For recipes that ask for a can of beans (15 oz) use 1/2 cup dry, which equals just over 1-1/2 cups cooked.



Fun Facts About Beans

Plant Parts

- Beans are edible seeds!
- Seeds are found inside of fruits (think of tiny appleseeds and peach pits)- which makes bean pods a fruit! Depending on the variety of bean, each pod can contain anywhere between one to twelve seeds.



Nutrition

- Dry beans are an inexpensive source of protein and fiber. They are also a good source of iron, magnesium, and zinc.
- Dry beans are low in fat, calories and sodium (especially compared to their canned counterparts).



Shapes, Sizes and Colors

- Beans come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colors. Try speckled cranberry beans, brilliant pink and purple Scarlet runner beans, or whatever variety you can find!
- Michigan is the second largest dry bean producer in the U.S., with 1,200 bean farms statewide. Pick Michigan beans as a healthy, local addition to your winter chili, salad or burritos.



Looking for locally grown beans?

Visit localdifference.org to search for local food, farms, and retailers.