



## The Parent & Teacher Corner

### Bountiful Beans

Searching for ingredients to make hearty and wholesome winter meals? Beans fit the bill. Starchy, full of fiber and often incorporated into comfort foods, beans are the perfect winter food.

Beans are actually part of a larger family of vegetables called legumes, which also includes peas and lentils. All legumes are low in fat and high in a variety of nutrients like fiber, folate and iron. Legumes also contain protein, making them a great choice for vegetarians.

Including beans at meals can have significant health benefits, particularly when replacing foods higher in saturated fats, like red meats and cheeses. Regular consumption of beans has been shown to reduce blood cholesterol levels, maintain digestive health, and reduce heart disease and cancer risk. It's no wonder beans have been called a nutritional powerhouse!

There are many different types of beans, each with their own unique flavor, creating endless possibilities for recipes. For recipe ideas, visit one of these websites:

[www.beaninstitute.com](http://www.beaninstitute.com)

[www.bean.idaho.gov](http://www.bean.idaho.gov)

[www.vegetablewithmore.com](http://www.vegetablewithmore.com)

## The Student Corner

### Have You *Bean* Around the World?

Beans are part of the family of vegetables called legumes, which also includes peas and lentils. Beans are enjoyed in many parts of the world because they are affordable, nutritious and tasty! Have you tried any of these beans?



**Fava bean** – a flat, brown bean common in North Africa and the Middle East. These beans are used in Egypt to create ful medames, stewed fava beans with a oil dressing. Traditionally eaten at breakfast, Egyptians also enjoy it throughout the day.

**Black-eyed pea** – a small, cream-colored bean with a black spot centered along the side. Originally from China, black-eyed peas are popular in the southern United States. They are eaten on New Year's Day for good luck or combined with rice and sausage to make the classic dish, Hoppin' John.



**Cranberry bean** – a tan-colored bean with streaks of magenta. These beans are native to Colombia, as they grow well in warmer climates. A Chilean stew called porotos granados combines beans, often cranberry beans, with corn and pumpkin. The broad term “porotos granados” can refer to beans in their shell, the dish mentioned above or specifically the cranberry bean.



## Ask the Dietitian

### How do you cook dried beans?

Preparing dried beans takes some planning but is well worth the effort. Compared to canned, dried beans are lower in sodium, contain no added preservatives and cost less. Follow these steps for cooking dried beans.

1. Remove beans from bag. Sort through beans, looking for any stones or debris. Rinse beans.
2. Place beans in a large pot. Fill with enough water so that the beans are covered by at least 1-inch. Allow to soak for at least 8 hours or overnight.\*
3. Rinse soaked beans and return to pot. Cover again with water, the same amount used to soak. Place pot over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and continue to cook until beans are tender, but not mushy. Cooking times will vary depending on bean type. For specific times, visit: [beaninstitute.com/recipes/bean-reference-chart/](http://beaninstitute.com/recipes/bean-reference-chart/).
4. Drain and rinse beans. Use immediately or store in refrigerator for up to 5 days.

It's still a good idea to keep canned beans on hand for those last minute dishes. Reduce sodium (up to 40%) by rinsing and draining beans before use.

\*Not all varieties of beans require soaking.

## Recipe of the Month

Who says beans can't be enjoyed at dessert? This recipe substitutes flour with black beans, boosting the fiber and protein content. No one will know the difference!

### Black Bean Brownies

Yield: 16 brownies



#### Ingredients:

- 15 ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mini chocolate chips, divided

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Lightly coat an 8x8-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Place black beans in the bowl of a food processor and process until smooth and creamy. Add the eggs, oil, sugar, cocoa powder, vanilla, baking powder and salt, and process until smooth. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chocolate chips and pulse a few times to incorporate.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, smooth the top with a rubber spatula and sprinkle with remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chocolate chips.
4. Bake 30-35 minutes, or until the edges start to pull away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan before slicing into 2-inch squares.

*Adapted from The Bean Institute*