



# DRIED BEANS

## What is It?

- Dried beans are the seeds from bean plants that are left on the plant after reaching full maturity until they become hard and dry. This process allows them to be stored and rehydrated at a later time to be eaten.
- Washington is the nation's sixth largest dried bean producer, with 23,000 acres of land devoted to growing dry beans.
- Most of the dried beans grown in Washington are pinto beans.
- The plants of dried beans add nitrogen to the soil, improving soil health. This makes them a good rotational crop with wheat and other grains.
- While beans should be eaten within one year for best flavor and nutrition, some studies have found dried beans to last for up to 30 years under the right storage conditions and still taste good enough to eat!
- Dried beans are a pulse crop, part of the legume family, along with lentils, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), and dried peas.



## Grow It

- Beans can be planted as soon as the soil has warmed. In Washington, this could be as late as May or even early June, so be sure to check the weather. Bean seeds planted in cold soil may rot rather than germinate, and plant growth will be slow in cooler weather.
- Some gardeners plant bush beans in succession, every two weeks until early August, for production throughout the summer and into fall. Pole beans will continue to flower and bear until frost, so there is no need for succession planting.
- Plant seeds about an inch deep or according to package directions. Plant small-seeded beans more shallowly than larger seeds.
- Install pole bean supports at planting time. Make a simple trellis of six-foot stakes and twine or set up a teepee of bamboo poles or long branches. Plant seeds in a row in front of the trellis with seeds four inches apart or two to four seeds at the base of each pole.
- Sow bush bean seeds in single or double rows with seeds four inches apart and rows two to three feet apart.

## Make It

Be sure to follow local Food Safety rules and regulations. Learn more here: [Food Safety Rules and Regulations](#) | [Washington State Department of Health](#).

### Recipe: Fresh Corn and Black Bean Salsa Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 (15.5-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed</li> <li>• 1 1/2 cup frozen corn</li> <li>• 2 cups salsa</li> </ul>	<p>Mix ingredients and refrigerate. Serve as a dip with tortilla chips.</p>

Recipe adapted from North Dakota State University [Spillin' the Beans](#).

Explore interactive taste test resources to encourage participants to try what you made!  
[Taste-Testing Event Resources](#)



Dried beans, credit: WSDA



## Beans Every Day!

### Learn It

#### Objectives

At the completion of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- List at least two benefits of eating dried beans.
- Identify which food group(s) dried beans belong to.
- Identify which part of the plant beans come from.
- Describe how dried beans are grown and harvested.

#### Materials

- Bags of dried beans or pictures of different types of dried beans
- Flip chart

### Directions

#### Warm Up

1. Hold up your bag or pictures of beans and ask participants if they can name any of them. Write down the names of the beans as participants call them out.
2. Ask if anyone has ever eaten any of the beans and what they like about them. Jot down answers as you go.
3. Prompt students by listing different foods with beans (chili is made with kidney beans, burritos are made with pinto, minestrone soup is made with cannellini beans, bean burgers are made with black beans, etc.)
4. Summarize takeaways and be sure to mention how tasty dried beans are.

#### Parts of the Plant

1. Ask participants if they know what part of the plant beans come from. The answer is the seed.
2. Explain the following concepts:
  - a. Beans grow inside seed pods, either on little bushy plants, or on long vines.
  - b. Beans are done growing some time in middle of summer, but farmers leave them on the plant until they dry out. The pods get shriveled and crunchy, and the beans inside get hard and dry. Harvesting the beans after they are completely dry allows them to be saved for a long time. After drying, they can be soaked in water and cooked until they are soft again.
  - c. Beans can also be eaten fresh (ask if anyone has ever eaten green beans). These are another kind of bean that are picked while they are young so they are soft and moist and easy to chew. But they need to be eaten within a week of being picked, or they will go bad. Dried beans can last for a whole year and still be safe to eat!





## Beans Every Day!

### Learn It

#### Directions

##### Nutrition

1. Ask participants to remind you what part of the plant dried beans come from. The answer is the seed.
2. Explain that the seeds are extra nutritious because they are filled with all the nutrients needed to grow a new plant, so beans are a very nutritious food. They're a good source of:
  - Protein, which helps our bodies grow strong muscles and repair from injuries.
  - Fiber, which helps our bodies digest food more effectively and helps us feel full.
  - Vitamins and minerals, like iron, which helps build the red blood cells that move oxygen around our body, and potassium, which is an electrolyte that helps balance fluid in the body and keeps our muscles and heart functioning properly.
3. Ask students if they can list the five food groups: fruit, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy.
4. Explain that beans have such a wide variety of nutrients that they fit into two food groups—protein and vegetables. So, every time we eat dried beans, we're filling up on important nutrients and eating multiple food groups at once.

##### Closing

1. Review lesson takeaways:
  - What part of the plant do beans come from? (Answer: the seed.)
  - In what food group are dried beans? (Answer: protein and vegetables.)
  - What nutrients do dried beans have? (Answer: protein, fiber, potassium, iron, and other vitamins and minerals)
2. Encourage participants to seek out foods with dried beans at home.

Lesson adapted from Eat Smart Move More lesson from [Virginia Cooperative Extensions Family Nutrition Program](#).



## Eat It

Beans contain a uniquely large range of essential nutrients, including protein, fiber, potassium, iron, folate, and zinc. They also carry some harder to find nutrients like phosphorus, copper, magnesium and manganese —which many Americans aren't eating enough of.



Beans growing, credit: WSDA



Dried beans, credit: WSDA

## Read It

- Lucky Beans, by Becky Birtha
- One Little Bean, by Kim Cecil
- A Bean's Life Cycle, by Mary Dunn

## More About It

- Take this bean personality quiz: <https://beaninstitute.com/resources/quizzes>
- Activities for Preschool from Nebraska Farm to Harvest of the Month: [Dry-Beans-ECE-Lesson.pdf](#)
- Lessons from Massachusetts Farm to School:
  - K-2nd grade: [Observing & Growing Beans](#)
  - 3rd-5th grade: [The Tallest Bean Plant - Massachusetts Farm to School](#)
  - 9-12 grade: [Cultural Resistance and Environmental Resilience](#)