

Beans

I don't understand why asking people to eat a well-balanced vegetarian diet is considered drastic, while it is medically conservative to cut people open. ~ Dean Ornish, M.D.

Beans are an inexpensive and delicious food that offers numerous health and longevity benefits. There are many advantages to eating a bean-rich diet. Your body needs fat and beans provide the good kind of fat. Beans also contain lots of protein that's nearly as high in quality as that in meat, eggs or dairy products. The only thing they're missing is amino acids but when you pair beans with brown rice, nuts or cheese because (which contain amino acids) you end up with an absolutely perfect protein.

Beans and legumes provide plenty of essential dietary fiber which promotes a healthy digestive tract. Fiber from beans also helps lower blood cholesterol levels and can reduce the risk of some types of cancer. Plus beans contain complex carbohydrates – nutrients responsible for providing energy to the muscles and brain – and have a low glycemic index which means they are slowly released into the blood stream and provide energy over a sustained period of time!

Among other things, beans are very good for your heart and digestive system. They provide an abundance of soluble fiber which traps bile (rich in cholesterol) as it passes through the digestive tract before it can be absorbed. Eating a cup of cooked beans a day can lower your total LDL cholesterol by up to 10% and reduce your risk of heart disease by 20%. A study conducted at the University of Kentucky showed that only three weeks of increased bean intake lowered men's cholesterol by an average of 19% - reducing the risk of heart attack by almost 40%.

Many studies have shown that beans keep normal cells from turning cancerous and inhibit cancerous growth. Beans are also great for diabetics because the soluble fiber in beans helps create more insulin receptor sites, which are like tiny docks for insulin molecules to connect to. Receptor sites allow insulin to get to the cells that need it, rather than floating freely through the bloodstream and wrecking havoc in the body. For people concerned about their weight, beans are excellent diet food because their high fiber content helps to curb the appetite and reduce cravings for fattening and unhealthy foods.

Lentils and split peas (legumes) are also highly nutritious and should be incorporated when aiming for a healthy diet. One cup of lentils contains more folic acid than any other unfortified food. They provide an excellent source of iron which is absorbed much more efficiently when they're eaten along with vitamin C rich food such as broccoli, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, jicama, kohlrabi, mangos and oranges. Lentils and split peas also become good sources of protein when combined with grains, eggs, seeds and dairy products.

Lentils and split peas cook much faster than beans and don't require soaking. Before cooking, pick through dry lentils or peas, looking for small rocks and bits of dirt. Rinse well, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and finish cooking, being careful not to overcook, as lentils and peas can quickly become mushy. Typically brown lentils take about 35-40 minutes to cook and yellow or green peas cook in about 25 minutes.

HOW TO STORE BEANS

There is strong medical evidence that complete freedom from eating animal flesh or cow's milk products is a gateway to optimal nutritional health. ~ Michael Klaper, M. D.

It's OK to keep beans and legumes in the plastic bags that they come in, but if you're going to store them for more than a year, it's a good idea to transfer them to an airtight glass or metal container and store them in a cool dry place (not the refrigerator or freezer).

There are many advantages to storing beans and legumes. They're already dehydrated they take up lots less space than canned foods, they're not fussy about how they're packaged and stashed away, and they retain their nutrients for a relatively long period of time. Depending on the way and length of time they're stored however, beans may take on or lose moisture, which will affect their soaking and cooking time. When cooking beans just keep in mind that the older and dryer they are, the longer they'll take to cook.

HOW TO COOK NEARLY GAS-FREE BEANS

Documented benefits of a pure vegetarian (vegan) lifestyle include permanent reduction in weight, blood pressure, serum cholesterol, and blood sugar, as well as risk reduction for cardiovascular disease and half a dozen common forms of cancer. ~ William Harris, M. D.

Place beans in a large bowl or pan and cover them with three times more water than beans. (One cup of dry beans will usually yield 2 1/4-2 1/2 cups cooked.) Let beans soak for several hours or overnight. Rinse beans well and cover them with water again. Bring to a boil then turn heat down to low and let simmer for twenty to thirty minutes. Turn off heat and let beans sit in hot water until they have cooled off. Check to see how tender they are. If they are not done, rinse them off and cover them with water again. Bring them to a boil then turn heat to low and simmer until the beans are tender. (Cooking time varies according to types of beans, how old they are, and how they have been stored.)

Never cook beans in the soaking water as it is full of complex and gas producing sugars that will be re-absorbed. You can substitute the bean cooking water in place of some of the liquid (usually broth or water) a recipe calls for. Don't add salt to the soaking water because it will make the beans tough. Only add salt after the beans are tender. Don't add acidic ingredients like tomatoes until beans are fully cooked and tender because beans won't further soften after an acidic ingredient is added.

Cook beans with herbs and spices such as fennel, anise, turmeric, lemongrass, dill, oregano, rosemary, cilantro and bay leaf to help reduce gas and intestinal symptoms associated with eating beans. (Also try adding a few drops of Beano to the first bite of cooked beans to help reduce bloating and gas.)

HOW TO GET YOUR FAMILY TO EAT BEANS

If we are facing in the right direction, all we have to do is keep on walking. ~ Buddhist teaching

If your family isn't used to eating whole grains or beans, educate them regarding their high nutritional value, then break them in slowly with lentils, black-eyed peas, white beans, chickpeas and lima beans – because these beans and legumes won't produce as much gas.

Not only are beans highly nutritious, they're very versatile and can easily be slipped into everything from tasty salads and lasagna to scrumptious cookies and cakes! Don't be afraid to spice beans up and try something new – the recipes included in this section combine unique blends of herbs and spices and the result is they are surprisingly delicious!

Get excited and be creative when it comes to introducing new bean dishes. Set one night a week aside to experience something healthy and new, and make the mood festive by using attractive and theme centered tablecloths, centerpieces, and dishes. Start out with "comfort food" recipes and serve beans with other familiar and well-liked foods. Garnish soups and salads with herbs and edible flowers to make them fun and more appealing. If your family "yucks" the first time or two, don't get discouraged. Stay positive and excited about trying new recipes and keep experimenting until you find foods your family finds agreeable. Focus on the benefits and keep educating your family about the blessings of eating beans.

Beans are such an inexpensive, nutritious, delicious and versatile staple that once you're in the habit of incorporating them into your recipes, you'll wonder how you ever managed without them! If you're serious about learning how to cook with beans, I suggest *The Daily Bean*, by Suzanne Caciola White, because it's hands down the very best bean cookbook I've ever seen. In fact, I've tried a lot of the recipes and haven't found one that I don't like yet!

CHUCK'S HUMMUS

3 ¼ cups cooked chickpeas or garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
½ cup raisins
2 tsp crushed red pepper
1 tsp chopped garlic
3 tsp olive oil
2 tsp water
2 tsp soy sauce
Juice of ½ lemon

Puree garbanzo beans, raisins, pepper and garlic in a food processor, adding oil, water, soy sauce and lemon juice as it processes. Puree until the mixture is light and fluffy. Serve with toasted pita bread cut into triangles, pita chips, or raw vegetables. (The Daily Bean)

JAMACIAN BLACK BEAN POT

2 1/3 cups cooked black beans, drained
2 TBS olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 tsp mustard powder
1 TBS blackstrap molasses
2 TBS honey or agave nectar
½ tsp dried chili flakes
1 tsp vegetable broth powder
1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
5 ¼ cups butternut squash or pumpkin, peeled and seeded and cut into ½ inch pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Sprigs of thyme to garnish

Preheat oven to 350° F. Saute onion and garlic in oil for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the mustard powder, molasses, honey or agave nectar, thyme and chili flakes and cook for one minute, stirring constantly. Stir in the black beans and spoon the mixture into a flameproof casserole dish. Mix the broth powder into 1 ¾ cups of water and pour over bean mixture. Bake for 25 minutes. Add the bell peppers and squash or pumpkin cubes and mix well. Cover, then bake for 45 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Garnish with fresh thyme and serve with brown rice.

CRUNCY ROASTED CICI NUTS

2 cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup butter
3 tsp minced garlic
¼ tsp cayenne pepper

Preheat oven to 350° F. Place the chickpeas in a mixing bowl. In a small saucepan, melt the butter with the olive oil. Add the garlic, cayenne pepper, and onion salt. Stir to blend. Pour butter mixture over the chickpeas and toss to completely coat. Spread the chickpeas out on a baking pan, just one layer deep. Bake for 30-45 minutes, stirring often, until the chickpeas are golden and crunchy. These can be served warm or at room temperature. (The Daily Bean)

STUFFED CELERY

- 1 cup cooked pinto beans, rinsed
- 1 cup whipped cream cheese
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- ¼ tsp coriander
- ¼ tsp cumin powder
- ¼ tsp paprika
- Dash cayenne
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced

Mash the beans and stir together the remaining ingredients. Chill for an hour to allow the flavors to blend. Cut celery stalks into 3-inch sections and fill with the spread. Dust with a little extra paprika. (The Daily Bean)

LOUISIANA BLACK-EYED PEA SALAD

- 3 cups cooked black-eyed peas (cooled)
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 cup diced red bell peppers
- ½ cup diced red onions
- 1 cup quartered cherry tomatoes
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- Sliced scallions
- Smoked cheddar cheese

DRESSING

- 3 TBS fresh lemon juice
- ½ tsp Tabasco sauce – or more to taste
- 1 TBS honey
- ¼ -½tsp ground cloves
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- ½ cup olive oil

Combine all of the dressing ingredients except the oil. In a steady stream, whisk in the olive oil. In a large bowl combine the black-eyed peas, celery, bell peppers, red onions and tomatoes. Add the dressing and toss well. Add Tabasco, salt and black pepper to taste. Set aside to allow the flavors to marry for at least 20 minutes or preferably several hours or overnight. Garnish with scallions and smoked cheddar. (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

Economics and politics simply intertwine in shaping conventional medicine's approach to cancer. Very simply put, treating disease is enormously profitable, preventing disease is not.

~ The British Cancer Control Society

LENTIL AND BULGER DRESSING

- 1 cup lentils
- 4 cups broth
- 1 cup bulger
- 2 cups boiling water
- ½ cup finely chopped sweet onion
- 1 cup fresh minced parsley
- ½ cup thinly sliced scallion

DRESSING

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 TBS Dijon mustard
¼ cup chicken broth
2 TBS olive oil
2 TBS balsamic or red wine vinegar
1 TBS apple cider vinegar
1/8 tsp hot pepper sauce
½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp oregano
½ tsp dried basil
¼ tsp ground cumin
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

In a medium saucepan, cook the lentils in the broth for 30 minutes. Let the lentils stand 10 minutes longer, then drain them. Meanwhile, put the bulgur in a heat-proof bowl, pour boiling water over it, let stand 10 minutes or so, and then drain it. Combine the lentils and bulgur in a large bowl. Add the onion and parsley. In a jar or small bowl, combine all the dressing ingredients. Pour dressing over the lentil mixture, and toss the salad. Add the scallions at serving time, and toss the salad again. Serve with a cold pureed soup and bread as a hot-weather meal. Serves 4 (Jane Brody's Good Food Book)

TRICOLOR CHICKPEA SALAD

2 large carrots, sliced into ¼ inch pieces
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
1 cup peas, fresh or frozen
5 ½ cup cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 TBS + 1 tsp olive oil
1 large onions cut into ¼ inch slices
8 cloves garlic, minced
4 ounces Swiss or other farm cheese cut into 1/3-inch cubes
4 TBS red wine vinegar
4 TBS fresh snipped dill or 2 tsp dried dill
Freshly ground pepper and salt to taste

In a saucepan, place the carrot in water to cover plus 1 inch. Bring the water to a boil, reduce the heat to moderately low, and cook the carrots for 5 minutes. Add the potato and peas (if fresh) and cook for another 10 minutes. If you are using frozen peas, add them during the last 2 minutes of cooking time. Remove the pan from the heat, and add the chickpeas, tossing to warm them. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a small skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until they are just tender – do not let them brown. Drain the chickpea mixture and transfer it to a serving bowl, Add the onion-garlic mixture and the cheese. Add the vinegar, dill, pepper, and salt. Toss the ingredients gently to combine them well. Serve the salad warm or at room temperature. Serves 6-8 (Jane Brody's Good Food Book)

SWEET POTATO LENTIL BURGERS

2 cups mashed yams or sweet potatoes (about 2 large or 3 medium)
1 TBS olive oil
1 medium white onion, diced
1 tsp minced garlic
2 cups cooked lentils
½ cup chopped pecans
Salt and pepper to taste
1 large tomato, chopped

1 red onion, chopped or thinly slices
1 ½ cups shredded lettuce
2 large pita rounds
Mustard-yogurt dressing

MUSTARD-YOGURT DRESSING

1 cup yogurt or sour cream
2 TBS prepared spicy mustard
½ tsp dill

Stir together until completely blended.

Preheat oven to 400° F. To make the mashed yams, peel and cube the yams or sweet potatoes and boil or steam until done. Blend in a blender or food processor with a little of the cooking liquid until smooth and fluffy. In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil and sauté the onion and garlic just until the onion is soft. Transfer mixture to a large bowl. Add the lentils, pecans, salt, and pepper and mix well. Form into 4 burgers and place on an oil sprayed nonstick cookie sheet. Cover with foil and bake for 20-25 minutes. Serve each in a warmed pita half. Top with tomato, red onion, lettuce and mustard-yogurt dressing. Makes 4 large burgers. (The Daily Bean)

DAL WITH RED LENTILS

1 ½ cup raw red lentils, rinsed and picked through
4 cups water
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp grated fresh ginger
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp turmeric
Pinch nutmeg
Salt to taste
1-2 small hot green chilies
1 plum tomato, diced, seeded, and minced
2 TBS fresh cilantro
3-4 large pita rounds

Combine the lentils with 3 cups of water in a large saucepan. Add onion, garlic, ginger, cumin, turmeric, and nutmeg. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 25-30 minutes or until lentils are very mushy. Transfer to a food processor or blender and puree until smooth. Return to saucepan and stir in salt. Simmer over low heat until mixture is thickened, about 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in the minced green chilies, tomato, and cilantro. Cut each pita round into 8 wedges and warm in a hot oven. If you prefer a crunchy pita, spray each wedge with live oil spray and place on a cookie sheet in a 400° F. oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until crisp. Serve the dip warm in a bowl surrounded by pita wedges and sprigs of fresh cilantro. 8-10 servings (The Daily Bean)

VEGETARIAN RED BEAN LASAGNE

2 TBS olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
1 medium carrot, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups tomatoes, chopped
2 cups cooked red beans, drained and rinsed
¼ cup fresh chopped parsley
1 tsp dried oregano

Salt to taste
1 tsp dried basil
1 egg, beaten
2 cups ricotta cheese
½ cup Parmesan cheese
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1 box lasagna noodles
3-3½ cups spaghetti sauce

Preheat oven to 375° F. In a large saucepan, heat olive oil, and sauté onion, carrot, and garlic for 2 to 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, bean, parsley, oregano, basil, and salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for about 15 minutes. In a small bowl, combine the beaten egg with the ricotta, ¼ cup of the Parmesan, and half of the mozzarella. In a 13x9x2-inch baking dish, spread about ½ cup spaghetti sauce. Place one layer of lasagna noodles across the bottom of the dish. Distribute a third of the ricotta mixture evenly over the noodles. Top with a third of the vegetable and bean mixture. Spread about ¼ cup of sauce over the top of the bean mixture. Top with another layer of lasagna noodles. Repeat the layering steps twice more, finishing with a layer of noodles. Top with sauce and the remaining cup of mozzarella and ¼ cup Parmesan. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes until mozzarella and Parmesan are bubbling. Let stand for 5 minutes before cutting. (The Daily Bean)

GYPSY SOUP

2 TBS olive oil
2 large onions, chopped (2 cups)
2 large cloves garlic, crushed
½ cup chopped celery (1 large stalk)
2 cups peeled and chopped sweet potato or winter squash
3 cups broth or water
1 bay leaf
2 tsp paprika
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp dried basil
Salt to taste
Dash cinnamon
Dash cayenne
1 cup fresh chopped tomato or 1 can diced tomato
¾ cup chopped green pepper (1 large)
1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 TBS tamari or soy sauce

In a large saucepan or stock pot, heat the oil and sauté the onions, garlic, celery and sweet potatoes for about 5 minutes. Add the broth or water and spices. Bring the soup to a boil, reduce the heat, cover the pot, and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the tomatoes, pepper and chickpeas and simmer for about 10 minutes longer. Stir in the tamari and serve the soup. (Jane Brody's Good Food Book)

TUSCAN BEAN SOUP

2 cups diced onions
1 cup peeled and diced carrots
4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 TBS olive oil
15 large fresh sage leaves
6 cups cooked pinto or small red or white beans, drained and rinsed
3-4 cups broth or water

Salt and pepper to taste

In a soup pot, sauté the onions, carrots, and garlic in the olive oil on medium-low heat until the onions are translucent and the carrots are tender, about 10 minutes. Stack the sage leaves and cut them crosswise into thin strips. Stir the sage into the vegetables. Add the cooked beans and 3 cups of the broth or water. Continue to cook on medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the soup is hot and simmering, 5-10 minutes. Carefully ladle about 3 cups of the soup into a blender and puree until smooth. Stir the puree back in to the soup. If you wish, add more stock or water for a less thick consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste. Gently reheat the soup and serve hot. (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

EVERYDAY SPLIT-PEA SOUP

½ ounce dried mushrooms, softened in 1 cup boiling water
2 cups dried split peas
8 cups water
3 bay leaves
1 tsp dried marjoram
2 cups chopped onions
1 ½ cups peeled and diced carrots
1 ½ cups chopped celery (include some leafy tops)
2 cups diced potatoes
¼-½ cup light miso
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp ground black pepper

In a large covered soup pot on high heat, combine the split peas, water, bay leaves, marjoram, onions, carrots, celery and potatoes. When the soup begins to boil, stir well, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and continue to cook. Meanwhile, remove the mushrooms from the soaking liquid and discard any hard stems. Slice or chop the softened mushrooms and add them to the soup. Strain the soaking liquid to remove any sediment or dirt and add the clear liquid to the soup pot. After the soup has simmered for about 30 minutes, stir it well. Maintain on low heat with occasional stirring or place the pot on a heat diffuser to prevent sticking and cook for another 20 minutes, until the split peas are very soft and the soup becomes “creamy” when stirred. Discard the bay leaves. Stir in ¼ cup of the miso, the salt, and pepper. Add more miso to taste, and serve. (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

CHICKPEA AND TOMATO SOUP

2 large onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1 heaping TBS *fresh* rosemary, chopped
1 35 oz can Italian tomatoes, chopped
3 1/3 cup cooked chickpeas (2 cans)
Salt and pepper

Saute onions, garlic, and rosemary in olive oil until golden. Add tomatoes and juice, add one half of chickpeas, salt, and pepper. Cook 10 minutes. Puree. Add rest of chickpeas. Puree the soup again, or roughly chop if you prefer it chunky. If too thick, add vegetable or chicken broth. Serve hot or cold, with a spoonful of yogurt in the middle and a sprig of rosemary.

MIDDLE-EASTERN CHICKPEA SOUP

1 large red potato, diced (about 2 cups)
4 cups water
3 to 4 reserved potato-cooking liquid or vegetable stock
4 cups cooked chickpeas, drained
1 TBS minced fresh mint
2 TBS olive oil
1 large onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
2 tsp salt
1 TBS ground cumin
1 TBS ground coriander
1 tsp turmeric
1/8-1/4 tsp cayenne
Salt and ground black pepper to taste
2 cups diced tomatoes
Chopped fresh parsley
Lemon wedges

Boil the potatoes in the water until very soft and then drain, reserving the cooking liquid. In a blender, combine the potatoes with about 1 cup of the cooking liquid or stock and puree; then transfer to a soup pot. Combine the chickpeas, mint, and about 2 cups of the cooking liquid and/or stock and blend until very smooth. Add the chickpea puree to the soup pot and heat gently, stirring frequently. Meanwhile, in a skillet, heat the oil and sauté the onions, garlic, salt, cumin, coriander, turmeric, cayenne, and black pepper until the onions are translucent, about 10 minutes. Stir the sautéed onions into the soup. If the soup is too thick, add more cooking liquid, water, or stock. When the soup is hot, stir in the diced tomatoes and cook for a few more minutes. Add more salt and black pepper to taste. Serve topped with parsley and offer lemon wedges on the side. (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

TEXAS TWO-BEAN SOUP

2 cups chopped onions
6 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
2 TBS olive oil
½ tsp salt
1 cup diced celery
2 cups chopped red and green bell peppers
1 small fresh chile, minced, seeds removed for a milder “hot”
1 tsp dried oregano
½ tsp dried thyme
2 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground black pepper
2 cups water
1 ½ cups cooked pinto, red kidney, or black beans, drained
1 ½ cups cooked black-eyed peas, drained
¼ cup barbecue sauce
Salt to taste

In a nonreactive soup pot, combine the onions and garlic with the oil and salt. Cover and cook on medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes, until the onions are soft and translucent, stirring occasionally. Add the celery, bell peppers, chile, oregano, thyme, cumin, and black pepper and sauté for 10 minutes, stirring often. Add the water and tomatoes, cover, and simmer until the vegetables are tender, 10-15 minutes. Add the black-eyed peas and beans and the barbecue sauce. Mix well, cover, and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Add salt to taste. Just

before serving, garnish with tortilla chips and top with grated cheese, minced onions and sour cream.
(Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

BLACK BEAN SOUP WITH CUMIN

2 ½ cups cooked black beans
7 cups broth
1 TBS olive oil
1 large onion, minced (about 1 cup)
1 large clove garlic, minced
¼ cup diced celery
½ cup finely diced carrots
¼ cup crushed cumin seed, or to taste
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
¼ tsp salt
1 chopped hard-boiled egg or egg white and chopped scallions for garnish

In a heavy skillet, heat the oil, add the onion and garlic, and cook them, stirring, over a low heat, until they are transparent. Add the celery and carrots and cook the mixture, stirring for a few minutes longer. Add the vegetables to the beans. Season soup with cumin, pepper, and salt, if desired, and simmer for another 30 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender or food processor and serve hot, garnished with chopped egg and minced scallions. (Jane Brody's Good Food Book)

CHICKPEA AND EGGPLANT STEW

3 large eggplants, cubed
2 ½ cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 TBS minced garlic
2 large onions, chopped
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground turmeric
2 large zucchini, cubed
3 14 oz cans chopped tomatoes
Salt and ground black pepper to taste
Sprigs of cilantro or parsley for garnish

TOPPING

3 TBS olive oil
2 large onions, sliced thin
2 cloves garlic, sliced thin
1 tsp sugar or zyletol

Heat the olive oil and add onions, garlic, and sugar. Sauté until the onions are golden and crisp.

Place the eggplant in a colander and sprinkle with salt. Set in a sink with a plate over the eggplant for weight and let sit for 30 minutes for the excess liquid to drain. Rinse eggplant and pat dry with paper towels. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a saucepan. Add garlic and onion and cook until the onions are soft. Add the cumin, cinnamon, coriander, and turmeric and stir. Add the eggplant and zucchini, stirring again to coat. Cook for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cooked chickpeas. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for 25 minutes.

Serve the stew over basmati rice and top with the crisp onions and garlic. Garnish the plates with either fresh cilantro or fresh parsley sprigs. Use an Indian flatbread for scooping up this delicious dinner. (The Daily Bean)

ZUPPE DIPISELLI SECCHI (SPLIT GREEN PEA, POTATO, AND ONION SOUP)

6 cups broth
1 ½ cups split green peas, picked over
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
½ stick un-melted butter
2 TBS olive oil
1 large onion, diced
¼ tsp fennel seeds
1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
Salt and pepper to taste
Crostini

ONION GARNISH

1 medium red onion, finely chopped
1 TBS finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

CROSTINI

3 slices good-quality sandwich bread
Olive oil

Remove and discard the crusts from the bread and cut the bread into ½ inch cubes. Pour oil to a depth of ½ inch in an 8- or 9-inch skillet. Heat over medium-high heat until it simmers. The bread will brown quickly in hot oil, so as you heat the oil, test for readiness by dropping 2 bread cubes into the skillet – the bread cubes should brown quickly. Remove and discard the sample pieces. Add enough bread cubes to form one layer without crowding. Turn to brown evenly, then remove quickly with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Fry the remaining bread cubes. If the oil gets too hot, either remove the skillet from the heat or turn down the heat for several seconds. Store in an airtight container for no more than 3 hours.

Put 4 cups of broth into a large soup pot and add the peas and potatoes. Bring to a boil over medium high heat, then reduce the heat to a very slow but steady simmer. Cook covered, until the peas and potatoes are thoroughly tender, about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the butter and oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until it begins to soften, about 4 minutes. Add the fennel seeds and continue cooking until the onion begins to turn golden, 4 minutes more. Remove from the heat and add the potatoes and peas. Puree the pea and potato mixture in batches, using a food processor or blender, and return it to the pot along with 1 cup more of the broth. Add the carrot and cook over low heat, covered, until the carrot is just tender – about 8-10 minutes. If the soup seems too thick, add some or all of the remaining broth. Remove the soup from the heat. Stir in grated cheese, and season with salt and pepper.

Combine all onion garnish ingredients in a small bowl. Serve soup with crostini and onion garnish on the side. (Joe Famularo's *Good & Garlicky, Thick and Hearty, Soul-Satisfying, More than Minestrone, Italian Soup Cookbook*.)

One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well. ~ Virginia Woolf

EGYPTIAN RED LENTIL SOUP

5 cups water
1 cup dried lentils
2 cups chopped onions
2 cups chopped potatoes
8 large cloves garlic, peeled and left whole
1 TBS olive oil
2 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp turmeric
1 tsp salt
1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
3 TBS fresh lemon juice
Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Combine the water, lentils, onions, potatoes, and garlic in a soup pot, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until everything is tender, 15-30 minutes. Remove from heat. In a small saucepan on low heat, warm the oil until it is hot but not smoking. Add the cumin, turmeric and salt and cook, stirring constantly for 2 to 3 minutes, until the cumin is fragrant. Take care not to scorch the spices. Set aside for about a minute or the oil may splatter when added to the soup. Stir the slightly cooled spices into the soup and add the cilantro. Working in small batches, puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Add the lemon juice. Return the soup to the pot and reheat gently. Add salt and pepper to taste. (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

BAKED BEAN SOUP

2 cups chopped onions
1 TBS olive oil
½ cup diced celery
1 cup peeled and diced carrots
1 TBS chili powder
2 to 3 tsp Dijon or German style mustard
2 cups water
1 ½ cups undrained canned stewed tomatoes
1 2/3 cups cooked white beans
2 tsp cider vinegar
2 TBS unsulphured molasses
1 TBS soy sauce
Salt and ground pepper to taste

IN a soup pot on medium-high heat, sauté the onions in the oil for about 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until the onions are translucent. Add the celery, carrots, and chili powder and continue to cook until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the mustard, water, tomatoes, beans, vinegar, molasses, and soy sauce. Cover and bring to a boil. Then lower the heat and gently simmer for about 15 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. (For a thicker soup, puree about a cup of the vegetables and beans in a blender or food processor with just enough broth to keep things moving. Stir the pureed mixture back into the soup.) This soup is a hit with kids! (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

*The standard four food groups are based on American agricultural lobbies.
Why do we have a milk group? Because we have a National Dairy Council.
Why do we have a meat group? Because we have an extremely powerful meat lobby.
~ Marion Nestle*

FASSOULADA (HEARTY BEAN AND VEGETABLE SOUP)

2 TBS olive oil
1 large onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 large potato, diced (about 2 cups)
2 TBS minced fresh thyme (1 ½ tsp dried)
6 cups water or broth
2 ½ to 3 cups cooked navy beans, pea beans, or white beans
1 green bell pepper
1 red bell pepper
¼ cup tomato paste
5 to 6 cups rinsed, stemmed, and chopped Swiss chard or spinach
½ cup chopped fresh parsley
3 TBS fresh lemon juice
Salt and ground black pepper to taste
Chopped fresh parsley
Crumbled feta cheese

In a soup pot, warm the olive oil. Add the onions and garlic and sauté on medium-low heat until the onions are translucent but not brown, about 10 minutes. Add the potatoes and half of the thyme and continue to cook for 5 minutes. Add the stock or water, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender, 5-10 minutes. Stir in the beans, bell peppers, and tomato paste. Add the Swiss chard or spinach, the parsley, and the remaining thyme and heat for about 3 minutes or until the greens are wilted and tender. Stir in the lemon juice and add salt and black pepper to taste. Top each serving with parsley and feta cheese. (Moosewood Restaurant Daily Special)

PUMKIN-PECAN CRANBERRY BEAN BREAD

3 cup flour
1 TBS cinnamon
1 tsp baking powder
2/3 cup milk
2 tsp vanilla
1 2/3 cup cooked pink beans, drained and rinsed (1 can)
2-3 TBS water
1 cup butter or coconut oil
1 ½ cups brown sugar (or use a natural sweetener)
2 eggs
1 15 oz can pumpkin
6 oz dried cranberries
¾ cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease three 8-inch loaf pans. Whisk together the flour, cinnamon, baking powder and baking soda. In a small bowl, mix milk and vanilla. Puree the beans in a food processor or blender with 2-3 TBS of water until smooth. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter or coconut oil and brown sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs and beat again. Stir in the pumpkin and pureed beans. Add the milk and vanilla mixture and beat once more. Stir in the flour mixture with a rubber spatula, stirring well and scraping the sides of the bowl. Fold in the dried cranberries and pecans. Pour batter into greased loaf pans. Bake for 45-50 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center or a loaf comes out clean. (The Daily Bean)

A good meal ought to begin with hunger. ~ French proverb

APPLE SPICE PUDDING (FLOURLESS)

3 TBS butter, softened
3 cups pureed pink or kidney beans
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
3 eggs
2 tsp vanilla
¼ tsp ground ginger
½ tsp nutmeg
2 tsp cinnamon
1 cup agave nectar or honey
½ cup olive oil
3 medium apples, peeled and cut into slices ¼ inch thick
¾ cup finely chopped walnuts
½ cup raisins

CREAM SAUCE

3 large egg yolks
1/3 cup agave nectar or honey
1 cup light cream

Whisk together the egg yolks and sweetener in a medium bowl until slightly thick. In a medium saucepan, heat the cream, stirring, over medium heat until small bubbles form. Whisk the hot cream into the egg yolk mixture, Return to the saucepan and stirring constantly over low heat, cook until the sauce is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and continue to stir for two minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes. Serves 10 (The Daily Bean)

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease a 9x13 inch baking dish. Mix butter, pureed beans, baking powder, baking soda, and the eggs in a large bowl. Beat well. Add vanilla, ginger, nutmeg and cinnamon; stir to mix. Add sweetener and oil and mix well. Stir in apples, walnuts, and raisins. Pour batter into prepared baking dish and bake for 35-40 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Serve with Cream Sauce.

OATMEAL CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

1 2/3 cup great northern beans, drained and rinsed
2 TBS water
1 TBS vanilla and 2 tsp vanilla (divided use)
1¾ cup flour
¾ tsp baking soda
¾ tsp baking powder
2 sticks butter
1 ½ cups brown sugar (or use a natural sweetener)
2 large eggs
3 ½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats
1 6-oz bag chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350° F. place beans, water and 1 TBS vanilla into a food processor and process until smooth. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and baking powder. In a separate bowl, cream together the butter and brown sugar. Add eggs and vanilla and blend until creamy. Mix in the bean mixture. Add the butter and bean mixture to the flour and stir until well mixed. Add the oatmeal and chocolate chips. Drop the dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake for 6-9 minutes or until golden brown. (The Daily Bean)

GINGERBREAD

1 cup dried brown lentils, washed and picked through
3 ½ cups water
1 TBS butter
½ tsp salt
½ cup olive oil
½ cup brown sugar or alternative sweetener
1 cup molasses
3 large eggs
1/3 cup half-and-half
1½ cups whole wheat flour
¼ tsp salt
½ tsp cloves
1 TBS ginger
2 TBS cinnamon
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda

Preheat oven to 350 ° F. Grease and flour a 9x13 inch baking dish. Place the lentils, water, salt and butter in a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 35 to 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain and place the mixture in a food processor or blender. Process until the lentils are smooth. In a large mixing bowl, cream the oil and brown sugar. Add molasses, beating well. Add eggs and half-and-half, beating again. Combine the puree and sugar mixture and beat on medium speed for 1 minute. Add the rest of the dry ingredients and beat another 3 minutes. Transfer batter to the prepared cake pan and bake for 35 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Absolutely enjoy – and don't forget the whipped cream! (The Daily Bean)

PINTO BEAN CARROT CAKE

1 cup brown sugar (or use a natural sweetener)
¼ cup butter
1 egg
2 cups cooked pinto beans, mashed
1 cup flour
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp cloves
½ tsp allspice
1 TBS vanilla
½ cup chopped walnuts
1 cup raisins
3 cups shredded carrots

Cream the sugar and butter. Add the egg and mashed bean, mix well. Add flour, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, and allspice; mix well. Add vanilla, walnuts, raisins, carrots, and mix well again. Pour batter into a 9x13-inch greased pan. Bake for 35-45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Top with frosting if desired – but this cake is just as good without. (The Daily Bean)

Cook with intention and bless all you consume. ~ Anonymous

HEAVENLY CHOCOLATE ALMOND RASPBERRY BLACK BEAN TORTE

1 ½ can or 1¾ cups cooked black beans, drained and rinsed
½ cup unprocessed coconut oil
1 cup sugar or Xyletol
3 eggs, separated
6 TBS cocoa
2 TBS almond extract
1/3 cup slivered almonds

RASPBERRY TOPPING

1 quart fresh or frozen raspberries
¾ cup Xyletol or sugar
1 TBS cornstarch

Mix raspberries, sweetener and cornstarch in a small saucepan. Heat until bubbling, reduce heat to low, and simmer for about 10 minutes until thickened. Let cool.

ALMOND WHIPPED CREAM

1 pint heavy cream
1 tsp almond extract
Xyletol or Sugar to taste

Whip until thickened and cream peaks. Add almond extract and sweetener.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Puree beans and 1 TBS water in a food processor until creamy. In a medium mixing bowl, beat coconut oil and sweetener till mixed well. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Add cocoa, almond extract, bean puree and almonds. Mix until blended. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Gently fold egg whites into the batter. Pour into a greased 8 inch round cake pan. Bake for 1 hour. Cool and top with raspberry topping and almond whipped cream. Garnish with fresh berries if desired. (The Daily Bean)

The life force and that which nourishes the spirit is closely intertwined with what take into our bodies. A Zen tale tells us to see the pot as our head and the water as our blood. The art of cooking involves preparing foods mindfully and projecting positive energy into what we eat. And part of bringing out the life force is showing loving respect for the labor involved in the cultivation and preparation of food. Speak a simple blessing over your food before every meal to reinforce your connection with the circle of life.

~ Anonymous