

National “Eat Your Beans” Day

is July 3rd!

The humble bean is a nutritional powerhouse!

Beans are a good source of protein, excellent source of fiber, and are naturally fat-, sodium- and cholesterol-free.

Canned or dried beans are simply delicious, versatile, filling and inexpensive!

Whether it be black, red, pinto, or the more than 400+ varieties, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends eating about 3 cups of legumes (beans, peas and lentils) each week.

Are you making beans part of your healthy diet?

If not, here’s a few pointers and recipes to get you started!

- Lentils, black beans and black-eyed peas are easier to digest when first starting to add beans to your diet.
- Soaked and cooked beans freeze well, up to 6 months.
- Drain and gently rinse canned beans to reduce the sodium content.
- Increase your bean intake slowly. Start by eating 2 to 4 tablespoons of beans per day, and gradually increase consumption to the ½ cup per day recommendation.
- Drink more water each day as you eat more beans.
- When soaking dry beans, change the water several times. The gas-producing fibers release into the soaking water, and discarding it removes some of these compounds.
- Certain herbs help break down the gas-producing fibers in beans. Try cooking beans with epazote (commonly used in Mexican cuisine), or asafetida (commonly used in Indian cuisine). Kombu, a sea vegetable sold in the Asian section of grocery stores, can also make beans more digestible.

TROPICAL BLACK BEANS:

Whisk together: 2 Tbsp. lime juice + 1 Tbsp. Extra Virgin Olive Oil + ¼ tsp. salt.

Toss with: 1 c. chopped mango or pineapple + 1 small avocado, chopped, and 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, rinsed and drained.

Enjoy: with whole grain corn tortilla chips!

SAVORY SOUTHWESTERN BREAKFAST TORTILLA:

Warm a nonstick skillet on low heat. Spread ¼ c. of refried beans on 4 (8 inch) whole wheat tortillas. Cook over low heat 2 ½ to 3 minutes until bottom is golden. Add a few slices of avocado and fold tortilla in half. Transfer to a serving dish and garnish each tortilla with ¼ cup salsa. Enjoy!

*When choosing canned, refried beans, look for those made without lard or animal fat.

DELICIOUS BLACK BEAN SOUP:

Coat the bottom of a large stockpot with cooking spray. Add 1 medium onion, finely chopped, and 4 medium garlic cloves, minced. Cook, stirring frequently, until onions are soft, ~ 5 mins.

Place 1 (15 oz.) can of black beans (drained and rinsed) in a blender; add sautéed onion mixture, ½ tsp. of red pepper flakes and 1 tsp. ground cumin. Cover. Blend on high until smooth. Pour mixture back into stockpot.

Place a 2nd (15 oz.) can of black beans (drained and rinsed) and 14 ½ oz. of vegetable broth in a blender. Puree until smooth; add to stockpot.

Stir a 3rd (15 oz.) can of black beans (drained and rinsed), 2 (10 oz.) cans of tomatoes with green chilies and 1 (11 oz.) can of yellow corn (drained and rinsed) into the stockpot. Bring to a boil; Lower heat to medium. Simmer 20-25 mins.

Information from various sources including: www.beaninstitute.com

