



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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Dried Beans Are Easy, Economical, Good and Good for You

NASHVILLE – Dried beans are easy to cook, inexpensive, packed with nutrition and taste great, says Pick Tennessee Products spokesperson Tammy Algood. Adding beans to dishes is also a great way to increase the size of a meal, since beans don't interfere with other flavors in a dish and have "endless" seasoning possibilities, according to Algood.

Algood represents the statewide Pick Tennessee Products campaign developed by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to help consumers identify and choose foods grown or processed in Tennessee. Algood creates recipes featuring foods grown or processed in Tennessee. Her recipes are available at PickTnProducts.org.

Beans contain the highest protein content of all commercial seed crops. Most are also loaded with fiber, complex carbohydrates and iron. Beans are naturally low in total fat, contain no saturated fat or cholesterol, and provide important nutrients such as calcium, folic acid and potassium.

Dry beans are particularly easy to store, and easy to harvest, as well. "If you grow your own beans," says Algood, "Just let them stay on the vine until the pods turn brown. When they rattle, they're done!" Once gathered, break open the pods and remove the seeds. Put the shelled beans in the freezer for 3 to 4 hours to kill any bugs or larvae that could be lurking among them, and then store them in airtight containers. They should be kept in a tightly covered container or jar in a dry, cool place (50-70 degrees). Older beans require longer soaking and cooking periods than freshly harvested beans. Algood cautions against keeping dry beans in the refrigerator, as they may absorb moisture and spoil.

"Dry beans will likely have tiny bits of rock or pebbles from the field," says Algood, "so cleaning them before cooking is important. Why don't dried beans come already perfectly clean? Washing can't be part of the packaging process for dried beans because water would rehydrate them."

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Every package of dry beans includes instructions for proper soaking, but Algood says the same rule of thumb can be applied to all beans. "Basically, whatever amount of beans you decide to cook, just add enough water so that they can double in size while remaining covered."

Gastric distress is associated with consumption of legume seeds, caused by raffinose sugars which cannot be broken down by digestive enzymes in the gastrointestinal tract. There is great variation in individual tolerance for beans in the diet, but generally, tolerance increases as consumption becomes more frequent. Some legume sugars are water-soluble and will be partially removed when the soak water is discarded, but ultimately, the purpose of soaking is simply to rehydrate and clean the beans. "Rehydrating the beans through soaking cuts back on cooking time, which in turn conserves the energy used by your stove."

Seasonings like garlic, onions and dried herbs can be added to beans while they cook. Add acidic ingredients, such as tomatoes, vinegar, wine or citrus juices only at end of cooking when the beans are tender. Add salt only after beans are cooked to tender; if added before, salt may cause bean skins to become impermeable, impeding the tenderizing process.

For more recipes featuring Tennessee farm and processed products or listings of more local and artisan food products, visit the TDA Market Development Web site at www.PickTnProducts.org.

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Please find a hi-res downloadable photograph of the attached recipe at www.PickTnProducts.org. Click on the featured recipe.

Cooking Dried Beans

Place 1 pound dried beans in 3 quarts of water. Cover and allow to soak in the refrigerator overnight. Drain and replace soaking water with 3 quarts fresh water. Place over medium high heat. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Allow to cook 2-3 hours or until beans are fork tender. If more water is necessary during cooking process, add hot water.

This and other news releases from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture can be found at TN.gov/agriculture
Market Development/Pick Tennessee Products news releases can also be found at <http://picktnproducts.org/media.html>