

MAY: FRESH BEANS

Did you know that **fresh beans** typically are classified into two categories based on how they grow? Bush beans are the mounding types, which grow closer to the ground, about 1-2 feet high. Pole beans are “runner” or vining beans that grow very tall and usually need some sort of support structure to hold them up. You likely know that green beans also are called snap or string beans, and are the most popular pod bean in the United States!

CHECK OUT SOME VARIETIES OF FRESH BEANS DESCRIBED BELOW!

GREEN BEANS

Green beans are often called string beans because a string runs along the seam of the bean. The snapping noise is the reason for its other nickname – the snap bean! It is best to handpick green beans from a market that sells them loose. The beans should be a bright green color. Do not purchase beans that are stiff or have the seeds visible through the pod because those beans will be tough.



EDAMAME

You may not know it, but edamame is a “fresh bean!” Edamame, packed with protein, is a variation on the yellow and black field soybean that is transformed into many popular soy products such as tofu, miso, and soymilk. Some call edamame the super or wonder vegetable because it is the only vegetable that contains all nine essential amino acids. This makes edamame a complete protein source, similar to meat or eggs. Edamame is rarely sold fresh, but is available frozen all year in pods and in shelled form.



LIMA BEANS

Did you know that lima beans come in all shapes and sizes? There are three main varieties: large, small, and dwarf. Large lima beans are green or speckled and they have a much creamier texture and earthier flavor than other lima beans. Most small limas are pale green. Small limas are less starchy than the larger varieties. Dwarf beans (also known as butter beans) are white and speckled. Most lima beans are dried, canned, or frozen and it is difficult to find fresh lima beans in the US (although sometimes they may be available at farmer’s markets!). Try all the different kinds of lima beans!



Fresh Beans Tips!

- **Green beans** continue to cook after you take them out of the boiling water. So take them out of the pot just before they are cooked the way you like, or plunge them into ice water immediately to stop them from cooking further.
- Throw some healthy **green beans** into your stir fry for some extra color and good nutrition!
- Add color, texture, vitamins, minerals, and fiber to your diet by adding **fresh beans** to your favorite vegetable soup.
- For a tasty and healthy sandwich spread or dip for vegetables, try mixing puréed **lima beans** with chopped garlic and add in your favorite fresh herbs and a touch of salt!
- For a nutritious snack after school or anytime, eat **edamame beans** right out of the pod (find them in the freezer section in most supermarkets).

Fresh Beans Recipe!

GREEN BEANS WITH TOMATOES – A HEALTHY, FLAVORFUL SIDE!

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 4 cups **fresh green beans** (cut into 2 inch pieces)
- 1 small sweet onion, cut into thin wedges
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 small tomatoes, cut into eighths
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. salt
- Dash pepper

Place beans in a saucepan and cover with water; bring to a boil. Cook for 3-4 minutes or until crisp; drain. In a small skillet, sauté onion in oil for 3 minutes then add the beans; sauté for 5 minutes or until tender. Reduce heat and add the tomato, oregano, salt and pepper; cook 1 minute longer, or until heated through.

[You can use minced garlic instead of onions, but be sure to sauté only for about 30 seconds till fragrant, then follow remainder of the recipe!]

Fresh Beans Recipes!

COLORFUL EDAMAME SALAD

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients

- 4 cups spinach
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes (halved)
- 1 cup cucumber, sliced
- ½ cup red onion, chopped
- 1½ cups shelled **edamame**, cooked

Combine all ingredients in a large salad bowl. Toss with a bit of reduced fat dressing of your choice.

BEEF BARLEY AND LIMA BEAN SOUP

Makes 6 Servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 can low sodium (14.5 oz.) beef broth
- 1 lb lean beef stew meat, cut in 1/2 inch cubes
- 4 cups water
- ¼ cup dry pearl barley
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 3 cups cooked large **lima beans** (2 14.5 oz cans, drained)
- 2 tbsp. minced parsley

Spray large pot with cooking spray. Place onion and carrots into pot, cook over high medium heat, stirring frequently until vegetables start to brown and stick a bit. Add ½ cup broth; stir to release brown bits. Cook until liquid evaporates and vegetables begin to stick again, about 5 minutes. Add ½ cup broth and continue cooking until liquid evaporates and vegetables are soft and golden brown. Add meat and cook until no longer pink. Stir in remaining broth, water, barley, salt and pepper. Simmer, covered, 25 minutes. Add beans and parsley; cook 10 minutes or until barley is soft.