

## PINTO BEANS



- In 2008, Yuma County producers grew more than 2,500 acres of dried beans, a significant increase from 800 acres in 2000.
- Dry beans will keep indefinitely if stored in a cool, dry place, but as time passes, their nutritive value and flavor degrade and cooking times do lengthen.
- Dried beans are almost always cooked by boiling, often after having been soaked for several hours. While the soaking is not strictly necessary, it shortens cooking time and results in more evenly textured beans. In addition, discarding one or more batches of soaking water can leach out hard-to-digest complex sugars. There are several methods including overnight soaking, and the power soak method, which is to boil beans for three minutes, then set them aside for 2-4 hours, then drain and discard the water and proceed with cooking.
- Pinto beans take longer to cook than most dry beans.
- In Mexico, Central America and South America, the traditional spice to use with pinto beans is epazote, which is also said to aid digestion. In East Asia a type of seaweed, Kombu, is added to beans as they cook for the same purpose.
- Pinto beans may also be bought pre-cooked and canned as refried beans, or whole with water, salt, and sometimes sugar.
- The pinto bean (Spanish: frijol pinto, literally "painted bean") is named for its mottled skin, hence it is a type of mottled bean. It is the most common bean in the United States and northwestern Mexico, and is most often eaten whole in broth or mashed and refried. Either whole or mashed, it is a common filling for burritos. The young pods may also be used as green beans.
- In the southwest United States, the pinto bean is an important symbol of regional identity, especially among Mexican Americans. Along with the chili, it is one of the official state vegetables of New Mexico and is commonly known as frijoles. This type of bean is also referred to as "Cowboy Beans" in Texas, all along the Mexican border and wherever Mexican cowboys were employed.
- The pinto bean most commonly used for refried beans (fresh or canned) and in many dishes. Rice and pinto beans served with cornbread or corn tortillas are often a staple meal where bean protein can make it a complete protein source. When it comes to making chili, if a bean is added, pinto beans are typically used, although the kidney bean, black bean, and many others may also be used in other locales.
- In the southeastern part of the United States, pinto beans were once a staple of the poor (usually eaten with cornbread, milk, and cabbage), especially during the winter months.

Some churches in rural areas still sponsor "pinto bean suppers" for social gatherings and fund raisers.

- Pinto Beans are the most widely produced bean in the United States and is one of the most popular in the Americas. It also contains the most fiber of all beans. Characteristically, pinto beans are known by their medium size oval shape, with speckled reddish brown over a pale pink base and solid texture and flavor.
- The official state vegetables of New Mexico are the chili and Frijoles (pinto beans).
- Pinto beans are a very good source of cholesterol-lowering fiber, as are most other beans. In addition to lowering cholesterol, pinto beans' high fiber content prevents blood sugar levels from rising too rapidly after a meal, making these beans an especially good choice for individuals with diabetes, insulin resistance or hypoglycemia. When combined with whole grains such as brown rice, pinto beans provide virtually fat-free, high quality protein. Pinto beans are also an excellent source of molybdenum, a very good source of folate and manganese, and a good source of protein and vitamin B1 as well as the minerals phosphorus, iron, magnesium, potassium, and copper.
- Pinto beans have a beige background strewn with reddish brown splashes of color. They are like little painted canvases, hence their name "pinto," which in Spanish means "painted." When cooked, their colored splotches disappear, and they become a beautiful pink color with a delightfully creamy texture.
- Pinto beans and other beans such as kidney beans, navy beans and black beans are all known scientifically as *Phaseolus vulgaris*. They are all referred to as "common beans" probably owing to the fact that they derived from a common bean ancestor that originated in Peru.
- Pinto beans were spread throughout South and Central America by migrating Indian trades. Beans were introduced into Europe in the 15th century by Spanish explorers returning from their voyages to the New World. Spanish and Portuguese traders brought them to Africa and Asia.
- As beans are a very inexpensive form of good protein, they have become popular in many cultures throughout the world. Pinto beans are the most highly consumed dried bean in the United States. Today, the largest commercial producers of dried common beans are India, China, Indonesia, Brazil and the United States.
- Dried pinto beans are generally available in prepackaged containers as well as bulk bins. Just as with any other food that you may purchase in the bulk section, make sure that the bins are covered and the store has a good product turnover rate to ensure maximal freshness.
- Whether purchasing pinto beans in bulk or in a packaged container, make sure there's no evidence of moisture or insect damage and that beans are whole and not cracked.
- Canned pinto beans can be found in many markets. Unlike canned vegetables, which have lost much of their nutritional value, there is little difference in the nutritional value of

canned pinto beans and those you cook yourself. Canning lowers vegetables' nutritional value since they are best lightly cooked for a short period of time, while their canning process requires a long cooking time at high temperatures. On the other hand, beans require a long time to cook whether they are canned or you cook them yourself. Therefore, if enjoying canned beans is more convenient, by all means go ahead and enjoy them.

- Store dried beans in an airtight container in a cool, dry and dark place where they will keep for up to 12 months. If you purchase pinto beans at different times, store them separately; they may feature varying stages of dryness and therefore will require different cooking times.
- Cooked pinto beans will keep fresh in the refrigerator for about three days, if placed in a covered container.
- Dove Creek, Colorado is the Pinto Bean Capital of the world.

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