

Legumes: Beans, Peas, and Lentils



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Beans, peas, and lentils are all seeds that grow in pods. We can tell the difference by their shape.

- **Dry Beans are oval or kidney shaped.** There are two main types of dry beans.

Red beans are used in bean burritos, bean tostadas, nachos frijoles, soups, salad bar choice, marinated salads, and main dishes or side dishes, such as vegetarian beans or baked beans. Red beans include:

- Pinto
- Pink beans
- Light red kidney
- Dark red kidney
- Red beans
- Pea beans
- Black beans



White beans are used in soups, salads, salad bar choice, or served as a vegetable. White beans include:

- Navy
- Small white
- Great northern
- Cannellini (white kidney bean)
- Garbanzo (chickpeas)

- **Peas are round.** Peas are used in side dishes, salads, casseroles, and soups

- Black-eyed peas
- Whole peas
- Split peas are whole peas split in half



- **Lentils are flat disks.** Lentils are used in soups

- Green
- Red
- Yellow
- Black



PREPARING DRY BEANS AND LENTILS

Sorting Dry Beans, Peas, or Lentils

Sorting means looking through the dry beans or peas to remove any foreign matter or shriveled beans or peas. The foreign matter found most often in dry legumes is small stones about the size of a bean that get in the product during processing. If this step is skipped, a customer could break a tooth eating a delicious chili or bean soup. Shriveled beans or peas should also be discarded since they have lost too much moisture and will not cook properly even after soaking.

Preparing Dry Beans and Whole Peas for Use

Preparing dry beans and peas is a step-by step process of sorting, soaking, and cooking that is the same regardless of the kind of beans or whole peas. See “Preparing Dry Beans and Dry Whole Peas” for more information.

Preparing Dry Split Peas and Lentils for Use

Dry split peas and lentils must be sorted and cooked before using in most recipes. See “Preparing Dry Beans and Dry Whole Peas” for more information.

Holding Legumes After Cooking

Cooked legumes can be prepared 1 or 2 days before they are needed for use in a recipe. After cooking, the legumes should be chilled in the refrigerator in shallow pans. They should remain in the cooking liquid. Once chilled, the pans should be covered and kept at 41°F and below until the next step of preparation.

Continued heating on a steam table will eventually cause a legume to have a floury or pasty taste. Heat the amount needed in batches, just-in-time for service, and place on the steam table.

USDA Recipes that Include Dry Beans, Peas, and Lentils

Main Course Dishes

Beef and Bean Tamale PieD-15A
Chili con Carne with BeansD-20
Taco Pie with BeansD-45B
Vegetable Chili.....D-49
Vegetable Quesadilla.....D-52

Side Dishes

Baked Beans I-06
Three Bean Salad..... E-11
Marinated Black Bean Salad..... E-21
Hummus E-24
Refried Beans..... I-15

PREPARING PRE-COOKED (CANNED) BEANS AND PEAS

Canned beans, and some peas, are the dry product that has been cooked. They should first be rinsed to reduce added sodium, and then added to a recipe at the step where the dry beans or peas have been cooked.