



ENJOY COLORADO PROUD BEANS



Just last year (2020), the first Colorado Proud beans hit the shelves! Now it is easier to support local food systems while reaping the many health benefits with which beans are associated. What makes beans so special, and how about some tips to cook up the best batch of beans?

Why Eat Beans?

Beans can simultaneously benefit human and environmental well-being.

- **Human health:** Beans are one of the richest natural sources of dietary fiber and pack quite the punch of plant protein, helping keep you full and promoting a healthy weight. They are also associated with gut health and a reduction in rates of various chronic diseases, including certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.
- **Sustainability:** Beans fix nitrogen, which is important for soil health. Also, they are very water efficient and can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - If you are looking for **local beans**, there are 5 types of Colorado Proud beans on the market as of July 2021: black-eyed peas and pinto, black, garbanzo (aka chickpeas) and mayocoba beans.

Cooking Tips

1. **Soak:** Sort through dry beans to remove any debris or damaged beans. Then, submerge beans by several inches to account for expansion and soak for 8-12 hours. Discard the soaking water, rinse, and cover the beans with plenty of fresh water to cook.
2. **Salt:** Adding salt to the soaking and/or cooking water shortens cooking time and can improve texture and flavor.
3. **Store well:** Dry beans have a long shelf-life, but storage is still important. Store in a cool, non-humid, dark place for best storage.
4. **Hold off on the acid:** Adding acid can prevent beans from softening. Although a little acid is fine, if you are adding lots of acidic ingredients (tomatoes, lemon, etc.) to a recipe, you may want to wait until the beans have softened before adding these ingredients.

Recipe Idea:

For a quick and savory dip, blend together 1.5 cups cooked beans with about 1/4 cup jarred green olives with their juices. Add a squeeze of lemon and minced garlic. Taste for seasoning and adjust as needed. Serve with fresh vegetables and crackers.