

BLACK BEANS

**Ingredient
of the Month**

Presented by ACFEF Chef & Child Foundation
and Clemson University



Black beans are appropriately named for their black, shiny appearance. Although the bean was once referred to as the “turtle bean” for its hard, strong appearance, the black bean has cream-colored flesh and a mild, sweet taste. Similar to its family of legumes, it has a soft, velvety texture, is small and oval-shaped, and holds well while cooking.

The black bean was originally brought to Europe by Spanish explorers after entering the New World. The use of this inexpensive form of protein quickly spread to Asian and

African cultures. Today, black beans are an integral part of many cuisines, and are used in Brazil, Mexico, other Central and South America countries, the Caribbean and in the southern United States. The black bean, navy bean, pinto bean and others are in the same species, *Phaseolus vulgaris*, or “common bean.” This is thought to depict that they all derived from the common place of Peru. The black bean is especially high in carbohydrates, protein and fiber. It can be dried, soaked or boiled. However, soaking is preferred in order to maintain the nutrients and cell membranes of the bean.

Healthy ingredient contribution

ANTIOXIDANTS: Black beans have the most antioxidant activity of all types of beans, containing flavonoids and anthocyanins, which are antioxidants.

FIBER: Black beans are a good source of fiber, which helps stabilize blood sugar levels.

FOLATE: Black beans are a good source of folate, which lowers levels of homocysteine. Raised homocysteine levels are a risk factor for stroke and heart disease.

MANGANESE: Black beans are a good source of manganese, an essential cofactor in energy production, enzymes and antioxidant defense.

MAGNESIUM: Black beans are a good source of magnesium, which improves blood flow, oxygen and nutrients in the body. Magnesium deficiency is associated with heart disease.

POLYPHENOLS: Black beans contain polyphenols, which are useful for elevated cholesterol. They act as antioxidants in the bloodstream and prevent cholesterol from oxidizing and forming plaques on blood vessel walls.

PROTEIN: As an excellent source of protein, black beans can form a complete source of protein in vegetarian dishes when paired with grains, such as rice and barley.

Varieties and uses

- Since they cook well in broth, black beans are excellent in **soups**. Beans can be left whole or mashed to thicken soup.
- The inside of black beans has a rich, velvety texture perfect for **dipping** sliced vegetables.
- Black beans are great when added to a **salad**, along with corn, peppers, cilantro and any other vegetables. If you prefer canned beans, simply rinse and drain. There's no need to heat them.
- Black bean **brownies** are a tasty alternative to brownies. Their texture adds a creamy thickness to any brownie recipe.

Storage

If dried, black beans can be stored for up to a year. They are easily accessible via canning.

Serving size

A one-cup serving (172 grams) of black beans contains 15 grams of protein, 15 grams of fiber and 41 grams of carbohydrates.

Contributions to this article were made by Elizabeth Rowe.

AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION

180 Center Place Way

St. Augustine, FL 32095

800.624.9458 | www.acfchefs.org



RECIPE

BLACK BEAN AND BARLEY SOUP

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

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| 1 sweet onion , finely chopped | 1 T. ground cumin |
| 1 green bell pepper , finely chopped | 1 T. dried oregano |
| 3 garlic cloves , minced | 1 t. chili powder |
| 2 (15-oz.) cans black beans , rinsed and drained | ¼ t. chipotle chili powder |
| 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes | ¼ t. salt |
| 3 cups vegetable broth | ½ cup pearl barley |
| | ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro , garnish |
| | Lime slices, garnish |

Method:

Heat large sauce pan over medium-high heat. Add onion, bell pepper and garlic; saute 3 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in beans, tomatoes, broth, cumin, oregano, chili powder, chipotle chili powder and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes. Add barley; cook until barley is tender, about 30 minutes. Garnish with cilantro and lime.



Nutrition Information

Calories: 220	Fiber: 12g	Calcium: 8%
Fat: 1g	Protein: 11g	Iron: 20%
Sat. Fat: 0g	Vitamin A: 10%	
Carbs: 46g	Vitamin C: 60%	

This recipe was tested by Clemson University's Culinary Nutrition Undergraduate Student Research Group.