

# inside nutrition



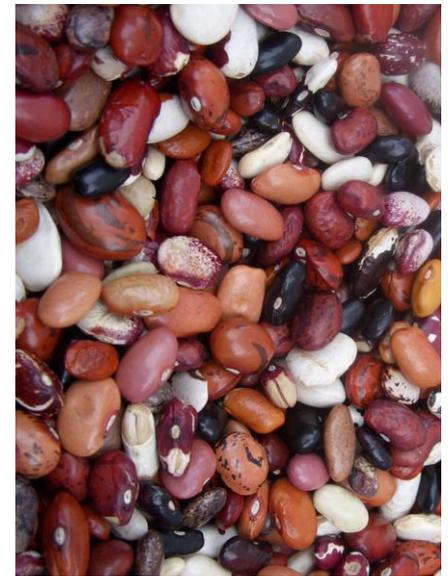
Many people turn their nose up at the thought of beans being incorporated into their diets, but beans are a great source of protein as well as many other nutrients. Beans are available in a variety of sizes, shapes and flavors and can be incorporated into your diet in so many ways. Read on to hear some of the health benefits of beans and ways to include them in your next meal!

- **Protein:** Beans are a great source of protein. One cup of beans contains more than 40 g of protein, making them one of the top protein sources for plant based foods. However, beans are an ‘incomplete protein’ which means they need to be eaten in combination with other foods that, in combination, will provide all the essential amino acids your body needs protein to build new cells, maintain tissues, and synthesize new proteins for your hair, nails, skin, etc. Some combination foods include brown rice, corn, nuts, and/or seeds.
- **Fiber:** Beans contain both types of fiber; soluble and insoluble. One serving of beans can increase fiber intake by 6g which is 20% of the recommended intake, that more than ½ of Americans are already failing to meet. Fiber promotes digestive health, lowers cholesterol, can help control blood sugar, and prevents constipation.
- **Vitamins and Minerals:** Beans are a rich source of B vitamins such as thiamin, folate, and niacin. Adequate intakes of B vitamins have been associated with lower risks of cardiovascular disease and some cancers. Beans are also filled with minerals like magnesium, phosphorus, copper, and potassium and are naturally low in sodium.

If you aren't sure where to add beans in your diet, here are few options:

- Toss canned beans onto a salad, into a rice dish, or in a stir-fry
- Serve hummus as an alternative dip
- Incorporate beans into stews, soups, pasta dishes, and side dishes
- Use as an alternative to meat, fish, or poultry
- Make stewed lentils or bean salad
- Keep cans of beans in your pantry, so they are ready to rinse and quickly add to your meals for a quick nutritious boost
- Store dried beans in your pantry for when you have the required time for preparation—they do take some time and effort to use

Try a new bean each week: kidney beans, pinto beans, lima beans, black beans, chickpeas, soybeans, butter beans, and white beans.



Source: The Bean Institute: © 2010 The Bean Institute ([www.beaninstitute.com](http://www.beaninstitute.com))

## healthy monday tip

It's good to go bad: A food's expiration date is a good indication of how processed it is. If your food takes years to expire, it's probably full of preservatives and artificial ingredients. Fresh produce, on the other hand, takes just days or weeks to meet its demise. Pick up good health this week by choosing foods that go bad. Start this Monday by selecting some recipes that include fresh foods. If you have a plan you'll be able to enjoy your ingredients while they're fresh!

**Try it – and have a Healthy Monday!**  
 Visit [www.HealthyMonday.org](http://www.HealthyMonday.org)