Legumes: Beans, Peas and Lentils

Various beans, assorted lentils and peas are a nutritious two-for-one pantry staple. Legumes are considered both a vegetable and protein. They are in both the vegetable and protein groups. Dry beans need to be soaked before cooking, while dry peas and lentils do not. Peas and lentils are easy to cook and add variety and protein to your meals.

How to Prepare Dry Beans

Before soaking beans, remove any damaged beans, small stones or dirt. Rinse and drain beans.

Ways to Soak Your Beans

Quick Soak: For each pound (2 cups) dry beans, add 10 cups hot water; heat to boiling and let boil 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and set aside for at least 1 hour*. Drain and rinse beans.

Overnight Soak: For each pound (2 cups) dry beans, add 10 cups cold water; let soak overnight in the refrigerator. Drain and rinse beans.

*Soaking beans for at least 4 hours helps reduce gas and bloating.

Cook

Cover beans with fresh water. Simmer for 1 - 2 hours until tender. Use cooked beans in soups, casseroles, and on top of salads.

Cook Once, Eat Twice

Busy days make it hard to prepare home-cooked meals. Planover meals use one main ingredient in a variety of ways. Think of ways to serve planover meals on your busy days.

Quick and easy tips for cooking once and eating twice:

» Choose a day to prepare large batches of your favorite recipes (double or triple the recipes.) Eat one batch and freeze the others.

» Use a main ingredient (chicken, beans, or ground meat) for planover recipes to reduce your time in the kitchen.

» Choose family packs of chicken, beef, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. These items can be used first as a main dish and second as a planover meal.

» Spice up your planovers — use them in new ways. For example, try leftover beef in a stir-fry or stew, or thinly sliced to make a sandwich.

Source: choosemyplate.gov

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Source: Whatscooking.fns.usda.gov

Mary Ehret / Penn State
**Barley Pilaf**

Short on time? Use quick-cooking barley for a speedy meal.

**Ingredients**

- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup onion (chopped)
- ½ cup celery (chopped)
- ½ cup green or red bell pepper, chopped (optional)
- 1 cup mushrooms (fresh sliced, or 1 - 4 ounce can mushrooms, drained)
- 1 cup quick-cooking barley (uncooked)
- 1 teaspoon vegetable, beef or chicken bouillon
- 2 cups water

**Directions**

» Wash hands with warm water and soap. Place a pan over medium heat; add vegetable oil, onion and celery. Cook, stirring often until onion is soft.

» Add bell pepper (if using), mushrooms and barley. Stir well.

» Add water and bouillon and stir to dissolve bouillon. Bring to a boil, lower heat and cover pan.

» Cook for 10 to 15 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers.

Notes: Use as a side dish. Use as stuffing for pork chops or chicken. Add 2 cups of any chopped cooked meat during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Use a calibrated food thermometer and check the temperature. Cook until the food reaches 165°F.

Nutrition Information: Calories 119, Fat 2g, Sodium 11mg, Carbohydrate 24g, Fiber 3g, Protein 2g

Source: USDA Mixing Bowl: What’s Cooking?

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**Make the Most of Leftover Bread**

Are you finding yourself with extra bread on hand? Storing bread properly can make it last longer. How many times have you found yourself trying to decide which breads to choose? There are a variety of choices available, including white, whole wheat, sourdough, raisin bread, or even marble breads. Breads are made from grains such as wheat, oats, corn, barley and rye. Choose a bread with whole grain flour as the first ingredient.

Whole grains provide fiber, B vitamins, protein, magnesium, iron, phosphorus and Vitamin E. MyPlate recommends that we make at least half of our grains whole, or at least three servings a day. Whole grains are important to our health because they help us maintain a healthy weight, reduce our risk of type 2 diabetes, stroke, colorectal cancer and heart disease.

**Try these ideas for leftover bread**

» Make stuffing to serve with a meal

» Make breadcrumbs to top casseroles or to coat fish or chicken

» Cube bread and add as an ingredient to meatloaf recipe

» Make homemade croutons to add to soups

» Make a grilled cheese sandwich

» Bake old-fashioned bread pudding

» Make French Toast

To maintain freshness learn how to store your commercially packaged bread properly. Here is a quick guide from USDA on proper storage of breads:

» 14-18 days unopened in pantry

» 2-3 weeks in the refrigerator after opening

» 3-5 months in the freezer

Sources: FoodSafety.gov

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**PennState Extension**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was funded in part by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the PA Department of Human Services (DHS), and funded in part by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), which is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Where trade names appear, no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Extension is implied. This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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U.Ed. AGR 21-22

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