



## BEANS



**Baked Beans**



**Ham & Navy Beans**



**Black Beans**



**Mixed Beans**

### Ingredients

Beans of your choice, but for this recipe I'm going to use brown pinto beans or white navy beans. I use about 1 cup of dried beans for myself – 1 ½ cups for 2 people. It depends on how much you would like to eat. I'm a light eater so maybe you want to cook 2 cups for 2 people, or more. Beans generally double in size and it depends on what you plan to serve with the beans.

Seasonings of choice – ham, or bacon would be my first choice unless I don't have either. Then maybe just salt and pepper. They taste good too. Chicken could be used. I might use ground beef, but I don't use other beef cuts for my beans. I grew up with pork seasonings for beans. That is my "go to" choice. But vegetarian, for tasty beans you'll want to depend on spices and herbs. Your choice. If you want a Tex-Mex type of beans use chilis.

Water – enough to cover the beans about 3 times.

Either a slow cooker (like a crockpot) or a Dutch oven type of pan – large enough to keep the beans covered in water to cook until tender.

### **Instructions**

You can put them on first thing in the morning in a crock pot with enough water to last all day but try to check the water early afternoon to make sure there is enough, and they don't go dry and burn.

If you are home, cook them, beans and water, for 2-3 hours on high, then add salt, pepper, garlic, meat if using, keep it on high and cook for another 2-3 hours. Then check for tenderness of the beans and taste the broth for seasoning. Here is when you can add other spices and herbs if using and adjust any flavors as preferred.

You should cook 1-2 cups of dry beans for approximately 6-8 hours. Toward the 6-hour mark, if the beans are tender, turn it to low, but keep cooking.

You can add diced onions to the pot when you add the salt. Maybe sliced celery. Get creative!

You can make many dishes using the cooked dried beans so it's okay to cook too many, refrigerate leftovers and convert them to a different dish the second time around.

### **TIPS FROM THE CHEF:**

You could serve these beans with a jalapeno corn bread – I love the taste and spice. Another day I'll share my recipe with you. Bread and butter is another good option for a side.

This is also good for families or events where eating is at different times – it stays hot in the slow cooker. If using a Dutch oven, just be sure to not leave them alone. They can boil dry quickly. Use enough water and check often. Stir occasionally.

On days I'm wanting my "kitchen therapy" I'll make a big pot of beans and when I have finished my meal for the day, I'll separate the leftovers into containers for – chili, casseroles, baked beans and refried beans – any dishes I might want to make during the coming week. They can be used just like canned beans.

Go through some recipes or think out loud and come up with some meals using beans – look at the grocery store or the food pantry for what kinds of beans are available to you and come up with dishes using what you have access to.

So, cook your heart out – make beans – enjoy the taste, the health, the ease of preparation and the variety.

**Recipe By: Granni K**