



The Nut Gourmet:

Nourishing Nuts for All Occasions
By Zel Allen

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Cooking Beans & Grains

We wanted to share with you, our readers, one of our favorite cooking aids: two charts for cooking grains and beans that give handy details like proportions of beans to water, length of cooking, and the cooked yield.

Consider the charts a general guide. Some varieties of grains require a few minutes more, or possibly less than we've noted. For example, sometimes millet will cook in 15 minutes. Another variety of millet may require 20 or even 25 minutes to cook through.

Beans, too, will often appear to have a mind of their own and will defy any attempt put them on a time clock. The time variations, however, will only be a matter of a few minutes.

Newcomers to natural foods can discover how easy it is to prepare good, wholesome meals that rely on whole grains and legumes as the centerpiece of their meals. If you're an old hand in the kitchen, the charts will provide a helpful quick reference for you.

We wish to pass on to you the all of the same joys and benefits our kitchen adventures have brought to us.

GRAINS COOKING CHART

GRAIN (1 cup dry)	CUPS WATER	COOK TIME	CUPS YIELD
Amaranth	2 1/2	20 - 25 min.	2 1/2
Barley, pearled	3	50 - 60 min.	3 1/2
Barley, hulled	3	1 hr. 15 min.	3 1/2
Barley, flakes	2	30 - 40 min.	2 1/2
Buckwheat groats *	2	15 min..	2 1/2
Cornmeal (fine grind)	4 - 4 1/2	8 - 10 min.	2 1/2
Cornmeal (polenta, coarse)	4 - 4 1/2	20 - 25 min.	2 1/2
Millet, hulled	3 - 4	20 - 25 min.	3 1/2
Oat Groats	3	30 - 40 min.	3 1/2
Oat, bran	2 1/2	5 min.	2
Quinoa *	2	15 - 20 min.	2 3/4
Rice, brown basmati	2 1/2	35 - 40 min.	3
Rice, brown, long grain	2 1/2	45 - 55 min.	3
Rice, brown, short grain*	2 - 2 1/2	45 - 55 min.	3
Rice, brown, quick	1 1/4	10 min.	2
Rice, wild	3	50 - 60 min.	4
Rye, berries	3 - 4	1 hr.	3
Rye, flakes	2	10 - 15 min.	3
Spelt	3 - 4	40 - 50 min.	2 1/2
Teff *	3	5 - 20 min.	3 1/2
Triticale	3	1 hr. 45 min.	2 1/2
Wheat, whole berries	3	2 hrs.	2 1/2
Wheat, couscous	1	5 min.	2
Wheat, cracked	2	20 - 25 min.	2 1/4
Wheat, bulgur *	2	15 min.	2 1/2

A basic cooking direction for all grains begins with measuring the grains and water into a saucepan. If you are cooking 1 cup (240 ml) of grains, use a 2-quart (2 liter) saucepan. Add 1/2 to 1 teaspoon salt if desired.

Cover the saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Turn the heat down to low, and steam for the recommended cooking time. Lift the lid and test the grains for tenderness. If the grains need more time, cover the saucepan and steam 5 to 10 minutes longer. If the grains need more cooking time and all the water has been absorbed, add up to 1/4 cup (60 ml) of water, cover, and continue steaming.

If tender, turn off the heat and allow the grains to rest 5 to 10 minutes before serving to fluff.

Buckwheat is the exception to the basic directions. Because the grain is so porous and absorbs water quickly, it's best to bring the water to a boil first. Then, add the buckwheat. When the water returns to a boil, cover the saucepan, turn the heat down to low, and time the steaming process.

- *Buckwheat groats are available toasted and untoasted. Cooking times are the same.

- * Quinoa should be well rinsed in a fine strainer for 1 to 2 minutes to remove the saponens, a natural, protective coating which will give a bitter flavor if not rinsed off.

- * Short grain brown rice is sometimes labeled sweet, glutinous, or sticky brown rice.

- *Teff can be enjoyed raw as well as cooked. Sprinkle it on salads or over cooked cereals to increase fiber and nutrition.

- *Bulgur wheat can be covered with 1-inch of warm water and soaked for 1 hour to soften. It is then ready to use in raw salads such as tabbouli.

BEANS AND LEGUMES COOKING CHART

BEAN (1 cup dry)	CUPS WATER	COOK TIME	CUPS YIELD
Adzuki (Aduki)	4	45 - 55 min.	3
Anasazi	2 1/2 - 3	45 - 55 min.	2 1/4
Black Beans	4	1 hr. - 1 1/2 hrs.	2 1/4
Black-eyed Peas	3	1 hr.	2
Cannellini (White Kidney Beans)	3	45 min.	2 1/2
Cranberry Bean	3	40 - 45 min.	3
Fava Beans, skins removed	3	40 - 50 min.	1 2/3
Garbanzos (Chick Peas)	4	1 - 3 hrs.	2
Great Northern Beans	3 1/2	1 1/2 hrs.	2 2/3
Green Split Peas	4	45 min.	2
Yellow Split Peas	4	1 - 1 1/2 hrs.	2
Green Peas, whole	6	1 - 2 hrs.	2
Kidney Beans	3	1 hr.	2 1/4
Lentils, brown	2 1/4	45 min. - 1 hr.	2 1/4
Lentils, green	2	30-45 min.	2
Lentils, red	3	20 - 30 min.	2-2 1/2
Lima Beans, large	4	45 - 1 hr.	2
Lima Beans, small	4	50 - 60 min.	3
Lima Beans, Christmas	4	1 hr.	2
Mung Beans	2 1/2	1 hr.	2
Navy Beans	3	45-60 min.	2 2/3
Pink Beans	3	50 - 60 min.	2 3/4
Pinto Beans	3	1 - 1/2 hrs.	2 2/3
Soybeans	4	3 - 4 hrs	3

Begin by washing beans and discarding any which are discolored or badly formed. Check for debris in the package such as small rocks or twigs and discard them. Beans cook more quickly and their digestibility benefits with soaking in water to cover by about 3 inches (7.5 cm) for 8 hours or overnight. Discard the soak water and cook the beans in fresh water.

Some bean cookery aficionados feel that salt and seasonings added during the cooking tends to make beans cook more slowly. Since beans require lengthy cooking, we recommend adding salt and seasonings during the last few minutes and find they absorb flavor quite readily.

There are other factors which contribute to the length of cooking, such as, hard water and beans that have been dried for a long period of time. For some of the longer cooking beans we have found that soaking 24 hours and changing the soak water 2 or 3 times hastens the cooking time.

Many people are concerned with the reputation that beans have for causing flatulence. Starting your bean ventures with small amounts helps to increase your body's enzyme production gradually. Soaking and cooking the beans thoroughly helps to break down the complex sugars (oligosaccharides) which challenge our digestive systems.

Some herbs that help the digestion of beans can be added during the cooking process. These include bay leaf, cumin, and winter or summer savory, fresh epazote (available in Hispanic markets). Many people from India maintain the tradition of chewing on dried fennel seeds or drinking a cup of fennel tea at the end of a legume meal to aid the digestion.

QUICK-SOAK METHOD: When time is limited, you can wash and pick over beans and put them into a stock pot with water to cover by 3 inches (7.5 cm). Bring to a boil and boil for 10 minutes to remove toxins. Then cover and allow to soak for 1 hour. Discard soak water, add fresh water, and cook until tender.

As a general rule of thumb, 1 cup of dried beans will yield about 2 1/2 - 3 cups (.5 to .75 liters) of cooked beans.

PRESSURE COOKING

For pressure-cooking beans you can choose to soak the beans overnight, use the quick-soak method, or forego soaking altogether. There are well-known chefs, like Emeril Lagasse, who do not soak beans before pressure-cooking.

Whether you choose to soak or eliminate that step, put the beans in the pressure cooker with 3 times as much water as beans. Cook at 15 pounds of pressure for 30 minutes for small beans. For large beans, such as limas or fava beans, pressure cook for about 40 minutes.

COOKING FRESH BEANS

Because few people actually grow beans and go through the time-consuming process of shelling and cooking them, most of the information about preparing beans refers to dried beans. However, fresh beans are delicious and easy to prepare and can often be found at farmers' markets. Fresh black-eyed peas, garbanzos, cannellini, limas, and others offer excellent flavor and nutrition.

There are two methods of cooking fresh beans: boiling or steaming. To boil, drop the shelled beans into boiling water to cover, and boil gently for 5 to 10 minutes. You may want to add some onions, garlic, herbs of your choice, and a dash of salt to the water to flavor the beans.

To steam, put about an inch of water into the bottom of a saucepan, and place the beans into a steamer basket that fits into the saucepan. Cover the pan, and steam over boiling water for 5 to 10 minutes.

After fresh fava beans are cooked, their tough skins are usually peeled and discarded. When left on, they give the beans a bitter flavor. To peel the skins, use a small paring knife and peel away one end. Then squeeze the opposite end and the bean will slip out easily.