Selecting, Storing, and Serving Ohio Beans

Beans are native to Central and South America. There are many varieties of beans—some green, others waxy. Shapes differ from round to flat, and oval. The fiberless, tender, stringless variety we know today was developed within the last 65 years. Beans are available from July through September. For information on bean varieties in Ohio, contact your county Extension educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Selection
- Snap beans should be light yellow in color or green; firm and crisp in texture; smooth with no evidence of seeds bulging.
- Flabby, tough pods or bulging seeds denote over-maturity and deterioration of nutritional value.

Storage
Fresh beans should be kept cold and humid in the refrigerator and used as soon as possible—at least in 5 days. They are best stored in a plastic bag.

Yield
Due to many variables, including moisture content, size, and variety, it is impossible to give specific recommendations as to quantity to buy. The recommendations below are approximations.

Snap Beans
1 bushel = 30 pounds
1 bushel = 15–20 quarts canned or 30–45 pints frozen
1½–2 pounds = 1 quart canned or 2 pints frozen

Lima Beans
1 bushel = 30–32 pounds
1 bushel = 6–8 quarts canned or 12–16 pints frozen
4–5 pounds = 1 quart canned or 2 pints frozen

Nutrition
The “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” recommends that adults need 2–2½ cups of a variety of vegetables each day. Beans can help to meet this requirement. Snap beans are a fair source of Vitamins A and C, calcium, iron, and potassium; 1/2 cup has 25 calories. Lima beans are a fair source of Vitamins A and C, folate, calcium, iron, and potassium. One-half cup cooked lima beans has 90 calories.

Safe Handling
Clean surfaces, utensils, and hands after touching raw meat and poultry and before you use them on fresh produce. Wash vegetables just before using. To remove dirt, wash thoroughly in clear water. Drain and rinse several times with cold water. Do not use soap, detergent, or bleach. Lift vegetables from water to prevent redepositing of dirt and residues. Break
ends off of snap beans before cutting. Peel, trim, and cut into pieces as desired.

**Serving**
- Beans may be served in salads, casseroles, and soups, alone or with other salad vegetables, and either hot or cold. Cooked fresh, frozen, or canned wax beans can be used interchangeably in most recipes.
- Beans can be left whole, snapped or cut across into 1-inch pieces, cut on the diagonal in thin pieces sliced lengthwise, or put through a bean slicer.
- Season snap beans with basil, dill, marjoram, nutmeg, savory, or thyme.
- Lima beans can be seasoned with snipped parsley, savory, or sage, or a small amount of butter or margarine.

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