

January: Magical Beans!

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist;
Carlos A. Urrea, PhD, Dry Bean Breeder Specialist
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu

Many have heard the popular tune of ‘beans, beans, the magical fruit, the more you eat the more you...’, well you know the rest. Although beans are not a fruit, they may be magical because they fit under



not one, but two food groups. Within USDA’s MyPyramid they are found under the vegetable and meat group because they are so packed with vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber. When it comes to US dry edible bean production, in 2010, Nebraska ranked first in production of great northern,

second in pinto, and fourth in all dry edible beans. Production is concentrated in western Nebraska, with Scotts Bluff, Box Butte, and Morrill counties accounting for nearly half of dry bean production. Check out the health benefits and tips to eat more beans and how the Nebraska dry bean breeding program is working to develop more tolerant and healthy varieties of dry beans and chickpeas.

Bean Benefits & Tips for eating them:

- **Healthy weight.** Beans are low in fat and calories and high in dietary fiber and protein.

The fiber in beans provides a sense of fullness that helps keep food cravings down. Depending on variety, a half cup of cooked dry beans is only about 120 calories.



- **Chronic disease.** Because of their high fiber, low glycemic index, and high nutrient content, eating beans may help reduce the risk of Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, and some cancers.



- **Recommendations.** Research shows that eating a half cup of beans several times a week, within a well-balanced diet, has resulted in a reduced risk of heart disease. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommends eating 3 cups of legumes a week for a 2,000-calorie diet.



- **Popular uses.** Navy beans are great for soups, stews, or baked beans. Kidney beans are used in chili and three-bean salads. Pinto beans are used refried in stews and dips. Great northern beans and lentils are used in soups and stews. Garbonzo beans are used in salads and hummus.
- **Minimizing the ‘musical fruit’ effect.** Discard the soaking water when making dry beans from scratch and rinse beans thoroughly before cooking, gradually increase the amount and frequency of beans, try over the counter products with an enzyme that breaks down gas-producing substances, and drink plenty of fluids.

Nebraska Dry Bean Breeding Program:

- The goal is to develop dry bean and chickpea varieties that can be grown in Nebraska, the High Plains, and beyond.
- Breeding is done to find traits that will make plants more tolerant to heat, drought, diseases, and increase their nutritional value.
- Breeding for resistance to diseases will allow growers to use fewer pesticides and reduce production costs.
- Nutritional studies in collaboration with UNL Nutrition and Food Science include looking at the health promoting antioxidants, carbohydrates, and lipids of split and whole pinto and great northern beans and how different growing conditions impact their contents.

Know how. Know now.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

January: Magical Beans!

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist;
Carlos A. Urrea, PhD, Dry Bean Breeder Specialist
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu

Beans are convenient and cost effective. They are available in the dry form in sealed bags and precooked in cans. A can of cooked dry beans can easily be transformed into a dip, main dish, soup, or salad. A drained and rinsed 15- to 16-ounce can of cooked dried beans provides about three one-half cup servings or enough beans for two main dishes.



Beans can be a nutritious part of your diet and there are tons of resources to help with recipe ideas and tips for cooking them.

Check out these additional resources on recipes, nutrition profiles, activities, and tips for cooking beans:

Alice Henneman, UNL Extension Educator, Cook it Quick Newsletters on beans:

- food.unl.edu/web/fnh/cooking-with-dry-beans
- food.unl.edu/web/fnh/dry-beans-from-scratch
- food.unl.edu/web/fnh/black-beans-rice-salad

For an extensive list of helpful bean-related links for consumers and health professionals,” visit the Beans for Health Web site: www.beansforhealth.org



This site provides pictures and descriptions from the CDC/NCCDPH to help you “use your bean” in selecting beans to try and to substitute:

www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/beans.html

For more information about cooking with beans:

www.state.id.us/bean

Informational handouts from US Dry Bean Council:

- **12 Key Nutrients:** www.usdrybeans.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/12_Key_Nutrients.pdf
- **Good Source Chart:** www.usdrybeans.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Good_Source_Chart.pdf
- **Magic Cooking:** www.usdrybeans.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Magic_Cooking_Factsheet.pdf
- **Nutrient Profiles:** www.usdrybeans.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Nutrient_Profile_Of_Beans.pdf

Find out how to build a bean tower:

extensionhorticulture.unl.edu/Articles/SJB/Bean_Tower.shtml

Learn more about dry beans:

- [Nebraska Dry Bean Commission](http://www.nebraskadrybean.com/)
- [USDA's Briefing Room on Dry Beans](http://www.usda.gov/pressroom/2010/08/20100810-usda-briefing-room-on-dry-beans)
- [Ag in the Classroom Dry Edible Bean Card](http://www.usda.gov/pressroom/2010/08/20100810-usda-briefing-room-on-dry-beans)
- [Crop Profile for Dry Edible Beans in Nebraska](http://www.usda.gov/pressroom/2010/08/20100810-usda-briefing-room-on-dry-beans)
- [Panhandle.unl.edu/centennial10](http://panhandle.unl.edu/centennial10)
- [Bean Improvement Cooperative \(http://www.css.msu.edu/bic/\)](http://www.css.msu.edu/bic/)

Sources:

1. US Dry Bean Council. (2011) Accessed at: www.beansforhealth.org.
2. Henneman, A. Cook it Quick Newsletters. Accessed at: <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/cook-it-quick-recipes>.
3. USDA. Inside the Pyramid. Meat & Beans. Accessed at: www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/meat.html.
4. Nebraska Dry Bean Commission. (2010) Accessed at: <http://www.nebraskadrybean.com/>.

Updated: January 2011 Know how. Know now.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.