

Beans & Lentils: Cheap, Filling, Nourishing

Supports: Building Block 8 — Macronutrients: Carbohydrates, Protein & Fat

Why It Matters

Beans and lentils are one of the best deals in the grocery store. They are the most protein-rich of all plant foods, they are loaded with fiber and nutrients, and they cost a fraction of what animal protein does. That combination of plant protein and fiber makes them genuinely filling and satisfying, so a small can stretches a long way. Whether you buy them canned for convenience or dried to save even more, they are an easy, budget-friendly way to nourish yourself and your family.

What to Know

Why they earn a spot in your cart

Beans and lentils pack plant protein and fiber into one inexpensive package, which is why they are so filling. The fiber supports digestion and helps you feel full and satisfied, and the low cost makes them a friendly stand-in for pricier proteins any night of the week.

Canned or dried: pick what fits

- Canned beans are ready in minutes; choose low- or no-sodium versions and give them a quick rinse to lower the salt.
- Dried beans cost the least; soak most types about six hours or overnight before cooking, though lentils and split peas need no soaking.
- Cook a big batch on the stove, in an Instant Pot, or in a slow cooker, then freeze in small containers for fast future meals.

Simple ways to use them

- Build a grain bowl with a whole grain, vegetables, beans, and a sauce you like.
- Add them to soups, chili, salads, or a whole-grain tortilla with salsa and vegetables.
- Mash chickpeas into hummus or roast them for a crunchy snack.
- Swap pureed white beans in place of some mayo in tuna or chicken salad.

Ease them in, at everyone's pace. If beans are new to your table, start small, like adding a scoop to a soup or trying half regular and half bean-based pasta. A build-your-own bowl lets each person customize, so different tastes at home stay happy while you blend beans in gradually.

Try This

Think about where beans or lentils could slip into a meal you already make. Start with one type you like or are curious about, and keep it low-pressure.

- ? Which beans or lentils do you already enjoy, or would be willing to try?
- ? Would canned or dried fit your schedule and budget better right now?
- ? What is one meal this week where you could add beans or lentils?