How to Prepare Dried Beans

*Note: Lentils, split peas and black-eyed peas do not need to be soaked.*

There are several ways of preparing dry beans for cooking. For all methods, start by checking the beans, and throw away any bean that is broken, discolored or shriveled. Then, rinse in cold water. Be sure to discard the water, and use fresh water for soaking.

**To prepare beans to use the same day (Hot Soak):**

1. Put beans in a large pot. Cover them with water. (10 cups water to 1 pound dried beans).
2. Bring water to a rapid boil. Boil for 2 minutes.
3. Turn off heat. Cover and let the beans soak for at least 1 hour.
4. Drain and discard water. Cook beans according to the directions on the package.

**To prepare beans to use the next day (Traditional Soak):**

1. Put beans in a large pot. Cover them with cold water. (10 cups water to 1 pound dried beans).
2. Cover the pot, and let the beans soak overnight.
3. Drain and discard water. Cook beans according to the directions on the package.

**Do the Math**

1 pound of dry beans (about 2 cups) = 5 to 6 cups soaked and cooked

1 – 15 oz can drained beans = about 1 ⅔ cup cooked beans

**A Gassy Subject!**

Some people may experience intestinal gas after they have eaten beans. Beans are a good source of complex carbohydrates, including dietary fiber. But if your body is unaccustomed to dealing with these carbohydrates, your digestive system will work harder than usual to digest, resulting in gas. You can cut down on gas by:
• Gradually increase your consumption of beans. Once you are eating beans on a regular basis, you will less likely have problems with gas.
• Use the Hot Soak method, and remember to drain and discard the soaking water, to get rid of the gas-producing substances in beans.
• As you are gradually increasing your consumption of beans or dietary fiber, make sure to also increase your fluid intake. Drink plenty of water to aid in digestion.

**Tofu**

Tofu is one of the ultimate convenience foods—quick and easy to use in a wide variety of dishes. It is highly nutritious and easily digested. Tofu is made by coagulating fresh soymilk to form curds, in much the same way that cottage cheese is made from cow’s milk. The curds are pressed to expel excess liquid and then formed into blocks of tofu.

**Types of Tofu**

Both regular and silken tofu can be found in soft, medium, firm and extra firm consistencies. In many recipes, you can use any type of tofu that you prefer.

1. Regular Tofu- Regular tofu comes in refrigerated plastic containers and can generally be found in the refrigerated or produce sections of the grocery store.
   • Firm or extra firm regular tofu is excellent for grilling, pan-frying, or preparing any dish that requires the tofu to retain its shape.
   • Medium or soft regular tofu will have smoother texture and is excellent for recipes that call for crumbled or mashed tofu.
2. Silken Tofu- Silken tofu has a softer consistency than regular tofu and will fall apart if not handled carefully. It is available in aseptic packages either on the shelf or in refrigeration.
   • Soft, medium, firm and extra firm silken tofu are for the most part interchangeable. Silken tofu is best used in baked goods, soups, sauces, dips, spreads, and smoothies because it has a creamy texture.

**Tofu Nutrition**

Tofu is high in soy protein and rich in many nutrients. Tofu that has been coagulated with calcium sulfate will be very high in calcium; check the Nutrition Facts label. The amount of water in tofu will also affect the nutritional value; the more water that is present, the less soy.
### Tofu Tips

Cut blocks of regular tofu in serving size pieces and let them sit briefly in your favorite marinade to soak up the flavor. You can grill, bake, or pan fry the pieces. Regular (not silken) tofu can be frozen. When defrosted, it will have a chewy, meat-like texture. Thaw in the refrigerator, in a tub of cold water, or in the microwave. Press out the excess liquid and crumble to use in casseroles, tacos, stews, etc.

### Textured Vegetable Protein

Textured vegetable protein is an easy-to-use soy food made from whole or defatted soy flour, or less commonly, from soy concentrates or isolates. The soy is then texturized through an extrusion process and formed into granules or chunks of varying sizes. When cooked, the texture is similar to meat. These nutritious nuggets are sold under a variety of names: textured soy protein, textured vegetable protein, textured soy flour, TSP® (a registered trademark of PMS Foods LP), and TVP® (a registered trademark of Archer Daniels Midland Company).

### TVP Nutrition

TVP provides all the nutrition of the whole soybean except none of the fat. Because granule size differs from brand to brand, a half cup measure of one product will not always be equivalent to a half cup of another product; check the nutrition facts label. The nutrient profile of TVP® is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Fat</th>
<th>Carbohydrate</th>
<th>Fiber</th>
<th>Isoflavones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>50 g</td>
<td>0 g</td>
<td>28 g</td>
<td>16 g</td>
<td>138 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tablespoon</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3 g</td>
<td>0 g</td>
<td>2 g</td>
<td>1 g</td>
<td>9 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Buying TVP

TVP is a dry product that usually comes as small, yellowish granules. The “textured soy protein” listed as an ingredient on the labels of some soy burgers, crumbles, and other packaged soy foods is similar nutritionally but the process for cooking with it at home is different. Not all grocers carry TVP, but can be found at most health food stores or through the company’s mail.
order. Look for TVP in bulk bins. At home, store the dry TVP in an airtight container on the shelf.

**Rehydrating TVP**

TVP is a dry product that usually requires rehydration. To rehydrate, pour a little less than 1 cup boiling water over 1 cup dry TVP and let it sit until the water is completely absorbed, about 5 minutes. You can use hot broth, stock, or tomato juice instead of water and the TVP will absorb the flavor. You can add dry TVP directly to soups and stews and it will soak up some of the cooking liquid as the dish simmers.

**TVP Tips**

Use TVP as a meat extender. Replace up to one fourth of the meat in your favorite meatloaf or burger recipe with rehydrated TVP. Or replace half or even all of the ground meat in most other meat dishes, such as tacos, with TVP. Most people won’t even notice a difference!

Take TVP along on hiking and camping trips. It does not require refrigeration and is lightweight!

**Storage of Soy Products**

**Tofu:** Storage guidelines for tofu depend on how it is packaged by the producer. Read labels carefully. Leftover tofu should be rinsed and restored in fresh water daily, to keep it fresh. Unopened tofu can be kept in the refrigerator for 5 days after the “sell by” date. Tofu should be used within 2 to 4 days after opening. Tofu may be frozen up to 5 months.

**Textured Vegetable Protein:** TVP has a long shelf life. If stored in an airtight container at room temperature, TVP will keep for several months. If TVP has been cooked or rehydrated, it should be stored in the refrigerator and used within a few days.

**Soy Flour:** Soy flour that is full fat should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer to retain the highest quality possible. Defatted soy flour may be stored on the shelf in an airtight container.

**Soymilk:** Some soymilks come in aseptic (non-refrigerated) containers. Unopened, these can be kept at room temperature for several months. Once opened, these products should be stored in the refrigerator and used within 7-10 days.
Soymilk Powder: Soymilk powder should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Whole Soybeans: Dried soybeans can be stored in an airtight container for several months. Some whole soybeans are available in a cooked, canned form. Unopened canned food products may be kept on the shelf for several months. Store opened canned soybeans or leftover cooked soybeans in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days or in the freezer for up to 6 months.

Soynut Butter: Store soynut butter in an airtight container at room temperature. It can also be stored in the refrigerator, but it will not dramatically increase freshness. Follow storage guidelines that come with the products.

Meat/Soy Analogs: Meat analogs that are refrigerated at the store should be stored the same way at home. Some products that come in boxes may be stored on the shelf. For these products, it may be helpful to transfer to airtight containers. Remember to save any instructions or cooking guidelines that may come on the box.

Food Safety Quick Tip

As with all food products, check for expiration dates. It is a good idea to date products when they are opened, or put in the freezer for long-term storage. Dating products will help eliminate the possibility of using/eating food products that may be unsafe or of poor quality.