



WAYS TO SAVE AT THE CO-OP:

We've all been struggling with the rise in prices for goods lately. At the co-op we are facing this struggle, with no choice but to account for this inflation as well. Supplying local and organic goods to our community is a hallmark of our community co-op, and making this affordable to everyone is a mission we are constantly embarked on. As we ride the waves of inflation now, and always, we have a few tips for our customers on how to get the most bang for your buck here at the co-op:

1. Shop the Deals:

We have deals for members and non-members every week. Our Co-op Deals switch out every two weeks, which means there's always sales to shop. We provide flyers at the front of the store detailing all the items on sale each week, as well as tags on the shelf. It's a great way to plan meals, based on deals and save each week!

2. Become an Owner:

If you want even more deals, becoming a member/owner at the co-op allows access to our Owner Basics deals on top of our Co-op Deals. Signing up for just \$25/year is a great way to double down on savings, while also enjoying many other perks of membership. Sign up today, easy-peasy, at check-out!

3. Shop Bulk:

Shopping in bulk is super cost efficient, it minimizes packaging (especially if you bring your own containers! get them weighed first at our registers), and you can get even MORE savings by special ordering bulk amounts through the co-op.



Recipes from [Grocery.coop/food-recipes](https://www.grocery.coop/food-recipes) >



Start with a clean, dry mason jar.

For a small to medium salad with few greens, a pint jar is perfect. If you like a lot of greens, or want to make a large salad, use a quart jar. Wide-mouth canning jars are easiest to fill, but regular jars work for smaller ingredients just fine.

Add 1-2 tablespoons of your favorite dressing to the jar. Next, add the hardest, least-absorbent ingredients. Chopped veggies like carrots, celery, fennel and onion can marinate in the dressing on the bottom and absorb flavor without compromising their texture.

Next, add cooked beans and/or firm grains like rice, barley or spelt; things that won't get too soggy if they sit on top of, or in, the dressing. Proteins such as tofu, cooked chicken, ham, or tuna can be added next.

Then add cheese and any softer veggies or fruits that are complementary to your mix. Berries, sliced apples and pears are good seasonal choices, but don't forget dried fruits like raisins or cranberries that are nice year-round.

Next add cooked, light, absorbent grains like quinoa or couscous, or pasta. Then seeds, nuts or croutons—stuff you'd like to keep fairly crunchy. Finally, fill to the top with chopped salad greens!

Salads: Some of my favorite choices for whole grain salads include bulgur, brown rice, quinoa, barley, wheat berries and farro (a type of wheat grain from Italy). Cook the grain according to directions on the package or the bulk bin, using salt in the cooking water. The grain should not be overcooked; when done the grain should still be chewy but not tough in the middle. Spread out the cooked grain on a rimmed baking sheet to cool to room temperature. Grain salads are a natural match with homemade vinaigrette dressing. For 4 cups cooked grains, make a dressing of 3 tablespoons olive oil and 1 tablespoon wine vinegar. Add flavorings like mustard and chopped fresh herbs and salt and pepper. Transfer the cooled, cooked grains to a large serving bowl and pour the dressing over the grains. Add thinly-sliced green onions, cooked broccoli or asparagus, and sesame or sunflower seeds. Refrigerate until cold and top with crumbled goat or feta cheese, if you like.

Pilaf: To make a pilaf, cook the grains as you would for the salad, including cooling. For 4 cups grains, heat 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large skillet, then add 1/3 cup chopped onion or shallots, 1 teaspoon finely-chopped garlic, and 1 teaspoon finely-chopped fresh herbs. Sauté until the onion is tender, add the grain and stir to coat. Add 1/2 cup water or broth, then bring to a simmer and season with salt and pepper. Continue simmering until the flavors come together and the liquid is reduced, about 5 minutes.

Polenta: The easiest version of polenta I know uses a buttered 8 by 8-inch baking dish. Combine 1 cup polenta and 1 teaspoon salt in the dish, then add 3 1/2 cups warm water and dot with butter. Bake, uncovered, in a preheated 350-degree oven. After 45 minutes, stir the polenta to incorporate any unabsorbed water, and continue cooking until the grains are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve with marinara sauce simmered with 2 or 3 sliced Italian chicken sausages. Satisfying but never heavy, these whole grain dishes add an exciting variety of healthy starches to your dinner plate.



Whole Grains

— More Than Just Side Dishes:
By: Tara Duggan

The Joy of Soaking (Beans)

By: Robin Asbell

Remember the story about Jack and his magic beans? Jack traded the family cow for a handful of beans, grew and climbed a tremendous beanstalk, and stole a giant's treasure. While beans might not be quite that magical, they are a nutritional treasure. They're a great source of protein, fiber and complex carbohydrates and are low in calories and fat. What's more, they're delicious and ever so budget friendly. It's easy to cut your overall food bill by using beans as a source of protein to supplement or replace (in the case of vegans and vegetarians), meat in your meals. Beans, with their healthy soluble fiber, actually lower your cholesterol, making them the perfect alternative to that roast or burger. What's not to love about beans?

In recent years, most of the recipes that you see suggest using convenient canned beans. I must admit that I have fallen under the spell of convenience, stocking my pantry with instantly available garbanzos and white beans. But, for me, like most convenient versions of food, canned beans fall short in some ways. Take a can of garbanzos. If you are making hummus, they are actually a teeny bit undercooked, and could use some more simmering to make a really smooth

puree. I've opened up a can of white beans to rinse them for a bean salad and discovered they're so soft that all I end up with mush. Convenient, but not always what I want.

No, if I really want beans to turn out just so, I prefer to cook them myself. Certainly it takes more time than opening up a can, but it's easy to do and doesn't require much active cooking time. Plus the cost of dried beans (sold in bulk at the co-op) is even more affordable than canned beans and there's less packaging to recycle.

There are a few different approaches to the simple act of bean cookery, and passionate advocates for each. Personally, I'm a soaker. I sort (to remove any small stones, shriveled or broken beans), wash and soak my beans overnight, then pour off the water and use fresh for the cooking. I believe it is a gentle head start that allows for even cooking without breaking the bean. The soaking water also takes out some of the indigestible starches that cause gas, so your family and friends may thank you. Some bean lovers swear by starting with dried beans and simply cooking them at a very low simmer. There are also fans of the quick soak, in which the dried beans are brought to a boil, taken off the heat, and left to stand for an hour. >>>>



Other approaches include slow cookers, pressure cookers, and baking in the oven. A good old crock pot is a great way to gently simmer the beans for several hours. One drawback of this is that you may overcook them and end up with a very soft bean. The absolute fastest way to cook dried beans is to soak them and then cook them in a pressure cooker, allowing you to cook even garbanzos in about 20 minutes. You can also bake your beans. Just put your soaked or unsoaked beans and water (enough water to cover beans by an inch) into a covered casserole dish, and bake them on low heat (about 325F) to gently cook them through. Give them about an hour to an hour and a half. Beans will triple in volume, so be sure your casserole dish is big enough.

There is a *whole category* of dried legumes that **require no soaking** and cook much more quickly, and those are the lentils and split peas. By virtue of their size, they soften in less time. They also tend to fall apart when fully cooked, making them wonderful in thick soups or curries. If you haven't tried French lentils, sometimes called Puy or Beluga lentils, they are the one lentil that doesn't fall apart, and that makes them great for salads. You can always cook plain beans in water, to add to multiple dishes through the week. The recommendation has always been to wait to add salt until the end, because it is thought to toughen the beans' skins, but that has been disproved. Beans want to soak up the water they lost in drying, so don't think that adding other liquids is going to make them better. I will attest that adding acids, like wine, tomatoes or even tamarind, before the beans are tender will keep them from softening. So, if you are making chili, wait to add those tomatoes until the beans are soft all the way through.

A step up from plain beans would be to add a few veggies and season them in a way that is versatile. If you like Mexican food, you can cook onions and garlic with the beans, and add cumin and chili powder toward the end, so you have a chili-bean base to add to burritos, mash for tostadas, toss into a quick chili, or use as a bed for spiced meats or seafood. Thinking more Mediterranean? Cook your white beans, and about halfway through, throw in chopped onions and garlic, and some sprigs of thyme, rosemary, or chopped sage. If you are leaning toward India, add a cinnamon stick and some curry spices, and you will be ready for dal, a soup, or simply serving alongside rice.

Of course, as long as you are simmering, you can easily go the soup route, with carrots, onions, celery and brown rice or potatoes. From there, just pick your seasoning theme. Add a hunk of smoky ham or turkey, or a handful of whole garlic cloves and let them slow cook with the beans. Just wait to add tomatoes or wine, so you get nice tender beans.

Whether they are for chili, baked beans, or soup, dried beans are a wonderful way to save money, enjoy great flavors and **invest in good health**.

