

MINUTE NUTRITION NEWS

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The Superstar in Your Homemade Pot of Chili

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Chili is great, but the nutritional superstar in your favourite chili recipe is really the beans. Read on to find out about the health benefits of beans and why you should be eating them more than just in your chili.

Nutritional Power of Beans

-  **Cholesterol and Heart Disease** – Beans can help lower cholesterol. They contain soluble fibre, which helps reduce production and increase excretion of cholesterol in our body. In addition, individuals who consume a Mediterranean diet that includes beans and other legumes have a 30% lower chance in having heart attacks, strokes or deaths related to heart disease.
-  **Diabetes** – Beans can help lower short-term and long-term blood sugar levels. These beneficial effects are likely related to the high soluble fibre content and natural enzyme inhibitors in beans that slow its digestion in the body.
-  **Weight Management** – Beans can help increase feelings of fullness, helping with portion control and therefore weight management. Several weight loss trials that compared diets containing beans versus general low calorie diets found that the diets containing beans resulted in greater weight loss and waist circumference.
-  **Blood Pressure** – Beans can lower blood pressure. Trials have shown that diets including beans can reduce blood pressure compared to other diets with similar calories but without beans.
-  **Inflammation** – Beans contain a plant compound called polyphenols, with anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Trials have shown that a Mediterranean diet that includes beans and other legumes is related to lower levels of inflammatory markers in our body. Since most chronic diseases (such as excess weight, diabetes, cancer) have been found to be related to chronic inflammation in our bodies, this can be another mechanism in which consuming beans can improve these conditions.

Just Getting Started?

You don't need to eat a lot to start getting the benefits of this nutritional superstar. Studies have shown that eating a 3/4 cup of pulses (beans, lentils, chickpeas) each day can significantly lower cholesterol. If you're not sure where to start, use this chart to help you choose which type to buy and how to use them.



Red Kidney Beans

The most commonly used bean in chili, but can also be used in soups, casseroles and salads.



**White Kidney Beans
(or Cannellini Beans)**

These beans are easy to hide into spreads, dips, and mashed potatoes.



**Black Turtle Beans
(or black beans)**

A popular bean in Caribbean and Mexican cuisines, used in rice, dips, tacos, or desserts.



White, Pea or Navy Beans

The most popular bean in Ontario and also the type used in baked bean recipes. Can also be added into soups and salads.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

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Double Chocolate Black Bean Brownies

If you're not a fan of eating beans on its own, do not fret. There are dozens of recipes online that can help hide beans into recipes you love. Here is a brownie recipe just in time for the holidays with added black beans that will give extra iron and fibre without your guests suspecting a thing!



Makes 16 squares

Ingredients:

1 ½ cup	Canned black beans, drained, rinsed and mashed
¾ cup	Whole wheat flour
½ cup	Unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tsp	Baking powder
½ tsp	Salt
3	Large eggs
½ cup	Granulated sugar
¼ cup	Unsweetened applesauce
3 tbsp.	Canola oil
2 tsp	Vanilla
¼ cup	Mini semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch (20cm) square metal baking pan with foil, leaving a 2-inch (5cm) overhang at opposite ends. Lightly spray foil with a non-stick cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine mashed beans, flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. With a wooden spoon, beat in eggs, sugar, applesauce, oil and vanilla until well blended. Stir in chocolate chips. Pour batter into baking pan.
3. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until just a few moist crumbs cling to a tester inserted in the centre. Do not over-bake. Let cool in pan on a wire rack. Using foil overhangs as handles, remove from pan and transfer brownies to a cutting board. Cut into squares.

Recipe adapted from Double Chocolate Brownies from Eatright Ontario's Bake It Up! Recipe booklet.

Nutrition information (Per 2-inch square):

120 calories, Carbohydrate 18 g (7% DV), Fibre 3 g (11% DV), Sugars 8 g (6% DV), Protein 4 g, Sodium 90 mg (4% DV), Calcium 4% DV, Iron 6% DV, Potassium 2% DV