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SPILLING THE BEANS ON PLANT PROTEIN + COOKING TIPS | Pravienna Naidoo

"I was determined to know beans", wrote Henry David Thoreau in his book: *The Bean-Field*.

How about you? How well do you know beans?

Creamy white kidney beans), meaty chickpeas, sweet sugar beans, delicate black beans, tender butter beans, and so many more - beans are one of the most powerful, nutrient-dense plant foods around. Consider this: Beans are packed with tons of fiber, as well as plenty of iron and protein. They are rich in antioxidants and phytonutrients. They are low in calories. Studies have found beans to lower the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

What to do with beans:

Many people avoid beans because they just don't know what to do with them. Are you one of those?

- Toss beans and diced veggies (such as celery, shallots, red peppers) with vinaigrette for a quick bean salad.
- Blend cooked beans with tomatoes, onions, and your favourite seasonings to create a yummy bean soup.
- Top a green salad with 1/3 cup of your favourite beans.

Puree beans with a bit of olive oil, a garlic clove, salt, and your favourite seasonings. Voila! And you have a quick dip or sandwich spread. Include 1/3 cup of beans with your other favourite toppings next time you make stuffed baked potatoes or sweet potatoes.

Add 1/4 cup pureed beans to your favourite pancake, waffle, muffin, or cake recipe. You'll be surprised at how moist and springy baked goods are when made with beans.

If you're new to cooking with beans, try these tips for delicious and well-cooked beans:

Be sure to wash and clean the beans first.

Soak dried beans for 8-12 hours before cooking (hint: cut a bean in half; if the centre is still opaque, soak longer). After soaking, rinse, fill the pot with fresh water, bring to a boil, then skim off the foam.

To aid digestion, bay leaf, cumin, anise, or fennel to the water. Cover and simmer for the suggested time.

Remember: Only add salt at the end of cooking (about 10 minutes before the beans are done), or it will interfere with the cooking process.

Quick tips:

For speedier prep, boil dried beans for 5 minutes, then soak for 2-4 hours. Or use canned beans instead (some people find them even easier to digest!). Be sure to avoid canned beans with added salt or preservatives and rinse thoroughly once removed from the can.

Get even healthier!

Would you like to learn how to choose and cook healthy foods like beans? Curious about how health coaching can help you make your own healthy changes? Let's talk! Schedule an initial free consultation - or extend this offer to someone you care about! I offer one-to-one coaching, group coaching, workshops and webinars, and workplace wellness programmes.

Source: Institute of Integrative Nutrition.