



Spill the Beans for Heart Health!

If you've stocked your pantry with canned beans from this winter's ShopRite Can Can sale you're in luck! Canned beans are versatile, helping you create delicious and healthy meals in minutes. They're high in essential nutrients like protein and fiber and they're low in fat and cholesterol. Not to mention, most canned beans cost less than a dollar per can which make them a budget-friendly pantry staple!

If sodium is a concern, look for no-salt added versions or simply drain and rinse them before using to cut down on the sodium content and wash away excess starch.

There are a variety of beans available in the canned foods aisle, each with its own texture and flavor. Certain beans work best in some recipes, while other dishes call for any type of bean. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Chick Peas – Also known as garbanzo beans. They are great tossed in salads or as an ingredient in a three bean salad (along with white beans and red kidney beans). Chick peas are also the base of a Middle Eastern bean dip called hummus. To make hummus, just use a food processor to pulse until smooth: 1 can drained and rinsed chick peas, 2 cloves garlic, the juice of 1 lemon, ¼ cup parsley, ¼ cup olive oil, and ½ cup plain yogurt. Before you know it, you'll have made a delicious dip for veggies and pita chips!

White Beans – Also known as cannellini, great northern, or white navy beans. These beans are creamy and work well in many soups and pasta dishes like: escarole and bean soup, pasta e fagiole (macaroni and bean soup), or penne pasta tossed with greens and turkey sausage.

Black Beans – Popular in Latin American cuisine, these beans pair well with rice dishes. Whether it's a jambalaya or the traditional arroz con frijoles– rice and beans – they are delicious. For something different, add them to a salad with crushed tortilla chips, seasoned lean ground beef, and salsa for a healthy taco salad!

Pinto Beans – Sometimes known as the “cowboy” bean, these are popular in Mexican and Tex Mex cuisine. Open up a can and serve as a fixin' for taco or fajita night. Make a healthier version of refried beans by sautéing canned pintos with 2 teaspoons oil and 1 chopped yellow onion. Once soft and heated through, mash with the back of a wooden spoon and serve!

Red Beans – Also known as red or chili beans, these are the most common beans used for chili. For something different and a sure party favorite, pulse 1 can red kidney beans with canning liquid, 2 teaspoons ground cumin, 1 tablespoon tomato paste, 3 garlic cloves, and 3 tablespoons olive oil until smooth. Serve with whole grain tortilla chips for a zesty red kidney bean dip!

Lentils – Lentils are grouped with beans and peas as part of the legume family. They are readily available in dry form and do not need to be soaked like other dried beans. Brown lentils are best used for soups because they soften when cooked. Green lentils are a better choice for cold summer salads because they have a nutty flavor and stay firm when cooked.

