

## Preparing Your Beans (any dried beans, not just pinto beans)

The first trick I learned about beans is that they have to be soaked and cooked for a good long while! That's easy enough to do. I typically sort and rinse the beans, removing all the super dry, shriveled looking ones and picking out whatever gravel or foreign matter is in them first. The "extras" can't be helped; our farming process is mechanized and industrialized. There is no way to get around finding a pebble or two, some gritty stuff on the beans, or a few not so good beans in any package.

The other part of preparing beans is that it is worthwhile to cook a whole bunch of them at once. I usually cook an entire 2 lb. bag. It takes no more time and energy to cook 2 lbs. of beans than it does a mere cup of them. C'mon. Just do it. You'll be glad you did.

When they are cooked sufficiently, I bag them in quart or gallon sized freezer bags and put them in the freezer. They're ready to go the next time I want to make something and I don't have to spend a day and a half prepping them every time! Plan ahead. It doesn't hurt.

I would love to explore other recipes for beans from other parts of the world! Anyone who has any suggestions, feel free to post a comment!

Refried Beans have many uses. Use your imagination!

We have used these beans as a dip all by themselves.

Warm them in the microwave with cheese. Add your favorite salsa and a bit of sour cream.

See Buddy's Beans and Crumbles for a meaty bean dip recipe.

Spread the refried beans on tortillas and top with cheese and rice, roll burrito style for a delicious treat. (Burritos freeze well and make a terrific quick bite for those days when you just don't want to cook or don't have time, for lunch at work, for on the go meals anytime).

They make great filling for enchiladas and tacos.

Try a 7 layer fiesta dip (the kind with the cheese, olives, salsa, guacamole, sour cream, etc).

Endlessly versatile Magic Refried Beans!

Enjoy.

## Magic Refried Beans

1 large onion (red, white or yellow, it doesn't matter), diced  
2 fresh jalapeno peppers, seeded and diced (more or less to taste).  
1 small can chopped green chilies  
1 14.5 oz can of diced tomatoes (I use the Lime Cilantro kind, but any diced tomatoes will work) do not drain.  
2-3 Tbsp x2 bacon grease, lard or cooking oil (Bacon grease is better tasting, but cooking oil is just fine if you are concerned about the cholesterol or meat content)  
2-3 C. cooked pinto beans  
1 Tbsp. Lime juice  
2 Tbsp Cilantro paste or fresh Cilantro to taste (I use Goya Recaito [http://www.goya.com/english/product\\_subcategory/Condiments/Marinades-Cooking-Ingredients](http://www.goya.com/english/product_subcategory/Condiments/Marinades-Cooking-Ingredients) typically available in the International foods section of the grocery store)  
2-3 Tbsp. ground cumin  
1-2 tsp. ground coriander seed  
1-2 tsp. fresh ground black pepper  
1-2 cloves chopped garlic (more or less to taste)  
Salt and Cayenne pepper to taste.

Over medium-high heat in a large skillet, heat the bacon grease or cooking oil.

Add onions and jalapenos. Add the cumin, coriander seed, fresh ground pepper, and garlic. Cook until onions are translucent, stirring frequently.

Add beans, tomatoes, lime juice, Cilantro paste, and green chilies. Simmer until bubbly.

Remove from heat and cool a bit.

Pour mixture into a food processor and blend until smooth. You may have to do this in small batches. Alternatively you can mash, whip or use a submersion blender to achieve a smooth consistency. In either case, remove the beans from the pan. The bean mixture will be loose, not like the canned refried beans you find in the store.

Return the pan to the heat and heat the second 2-3 Tbsp. bacon grease or cooking oil.

Add bean mixture. Cook for several minutes to remove some of the moisture and the beans are a thick but spreadable consistency.

Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator or spoon mixture into Ziploc bags and put them in the freezer.