

Fruit and Vegetable Guide Series: Green Beans

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Utah Local Fresh Season: Late Spring to early Fall

Availability: Green beans are usually available from late spring into early fall.

Eating: Green beans are mild in flavor. They are best cooked or steamed. Also, they can be eaten raw. Green beans can be incorporated into many dishes.

Selecting: Generally green beans are best when sold loose, rather than pre-packaged in a bag. Try to avoid beans with scars or "rust"/other discoloration. Any cut or opening could allow dirt to get into the inside of the bean. Also try to pick beans with the stems attached, which keeps the insides sealed clean as well. Get beans that are close to each other in size, as that will help them cook at a similar rate. Select green beans that are pliable or flexible rather than tough.

Cleaning and Preparing: To clean, rinse and scrub well under warm tap water. Be sure all visible debris is removed and all areas are rinsed. Cut away any damaged or discolored areas. Cut or break away the tips at both ends. Wash green beans before eating or cooking, but not before storing.

Storing: Fresh green beans stay fresh in a refrigerator for 5-7 days. Store beans in an airtight bag to prevent moisture loss and wilting. Wait to wash beans until you are ready to use them. To keep longer they can be frozen, canned, or dried.

Cooking: The flavor and texture of green beans are enhanced through cooking. The best way to cook green beans is to steam or broil.

- **Steaming:** After cleaning, place in a steamer. Place the steamer in a frying pan on the stove, and add about 2



inches of water. Cover and let boil for about 5 minutes, or until the spears are tender. Remove and serve as a side dish, or cool, slice, and add to a salad.

- **Microwaving:** Green beans can be steamed in the microwave as well. Place the green beans in a bowl or serving dish, depending on the amount you are steaming. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 1 inch of water to cover the base of the dish. Cover the bowl or dish with plastic wrap to lock the steam in. Cook in the microwave for 2-5 minutes depending on the amount of beans you are steaming. Cook until beans have reached the desired doneness.
- **Broiling:** Preheat oven to broil. Cover cookie sheet with aluminum foil. Spread clean/prepped beans in a single layer on the sheet. Lightly spray beans on both sides with olive oil. Sprinkle beans with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper. Broil for approximately 8 minutes—until beans start to lightly brown. Carefully remove tray, and turn beans to other side with spatula. Broil other side for approximately 5 to 8 minutes.

Incorporation into other recipes: Steam, cool, and chop $\frac{1}{2}$ inch sections to add to pasta or green salad. After broiling, serve as a side dish. Stir fry whole or cut in half with other vegetables like carrots, onions, broccoli, cabbage, and red or green peppers. Add spices like ginger, garlic, pepper and soy sauce and serve over brown rice.

Growing: For information on growing green beans, see “Beans in the Garden” by Dan Drost. <https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/beans-in-the-garden>

Preserving Green Beans: The best way to preserve beans is by freezing, canning or drying. For more information visit <https://extension.usu.edu/preserve-the-harvest/> and <https://nchfp.uga.edu/#gsc.tab=0>.

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