



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

# GREEN BEANS



Green beans are edible pods also known as “garden” beans, “snap” beans, and “string” beans. They are classified as bush beans or pole beans. Bush beans grow on compact bushes. Pole beans grow on vines that climb and can grow as high as 15 feet tall. Like dry beans, green beans belong to the Fabaceae or legume family. Green beans were first cultivated in Mesoamerica over 8,000 years ago. Mesoamerica is the area between Central Mexico and Costa Rica. Green beans made their way to North America through Indigenous trade routes thousands of years ago. After the Spanish conquest, they were taken to Europe and from there, made their way around the world. Green beans are crunchy with an earthy, sweet, fresh taste. They can be used raw, though they are preferred when baked, boiled, braised, canned, fried, pickled, steamed, or sautéed. Michigan green beans are harvested from June through September.



## GREEN BEANS ARE

- An excellent source of vitamin K. Vitamin K is vital for blood clotting and healthy bones.
- A good source of vitamin C\*. Vitamin C is important to the body's tissues and supports a healthy immune system.
- A source of fiber. Fiber helps us feel fuller and benefits the digestive and cardiovascular systems.

*\*Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium, and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*

## MICHIGAN MADE

Michigan farmers grow green beans statewide for the fresh and processed markets. Michigan ranks third nationally for processed green beans. Across the state there are over 16,000 acres of green beans produced each year for the fresh market and processing. Many Michigan farms, patches, and orchards offer “u-pick” operations where consumers can hand pick green beans. Because green beans are easy to grow in Michigan, they are a popular choice for home and community gardens. Farms in St. Joseph, Mason, Cass, and Kalkaska Counties are the largest producers of green beans in Michigan.

## FUN FACTS

- Green beans grow fast.
- Wisconsin ranks first for green bean production in the United States, followed by New York, Michigan, Oregon, and Florida.
- Harvesting beans in the morning when their sugar content is high provides the best flavor.
- Green bean plants take nitrogen from the air and use it to enrich soil through their roots.
- Bush or pole bean pods can be green, yellow, red, purple, brown, speckled, or striated and the seeds inside are always green.
- Green beans get their color from chlorophyll. Chlorophyll converts sunlight into nutrients and gives green plants their color.
- Purple beans get their color from anthocyanin. When anthocyanin is heated it deteriorates and the chlorophyll is left, turning the beans green.
- Yellow beans do not contain chlorophyll and are called wax beans.
- Indigenous Peoples in the Americas refer to pole beans as one of the original “Three Sisters” crops. They are planted in mounds with squash and corn by Indigenous women farmers. The plants nurture each other like family, growing better together. This form of planting became common across North America.

## BUYING AND STORING

- Select green beans that are firm with a bright, even color. Avoid beans that are bulging, dry, hard, or have blemishes.
- Store green beans in an open plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to five days. To freeze, place blanched green beans in freezer bags or containers and freeze for up to eight months.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before using.

## MORE THAN FRESH

In addition to fresh, green beans are available frozen and canned. When buying packaged green beans, be sure to read labels and choose items that are reduced or low-sodium (salt), or no salt added.

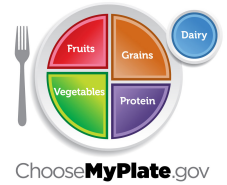




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## EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Green beans are part of the Vegetable Group. Most people need 2–3 cups of vegetables per day. For more information visit: [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov).



## IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

## SAUTÉED GREEN BEANS WITH TOMATOES

Time: 15 minutes | Makes: 6 servings | Serving Size: ¾ cup

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 65, Carbohydrate 9g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Protein 2g, Total Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 0.5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 106mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



### INGREDIENTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 4 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided                  | 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved lengthwise |
| ¼ cup onion, diced                                  | ¼ teaspoon kosher salt                             |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced or ½ teaspoon garlic powder | ¼ teaspoon black pepper                            |
| 1 pound fresh green beans, ends trimmed             | 1 tablespoon lemon juice                           |

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Place green beans in a microwave-safe bowl. Add just enough water to cover the bottom of the bowl, cover and microwave on high for 4 to 6 minutes until green beans are tender.
- While green beans are cooking, heat 2 teaspoons of oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onions and garlic and sauté until onions are translucent, about 3 minutes.
- Using hot pads, remove bowl of green beans from microwave. Carefully remove cover away from face and hands to release steam, drain water, and toss green beans with salt, pepper, and remaining oil.
- Add green beans and tomatoes to frying pan. Heat until tomatoes blister, shaking pan occasionally, about 2 minutes.
- Transfer to bowl, add lemon juice, and mix gently. Serve hot or cold.

### TRY THIS

- Sauté green beans with a little oil, minced garlic, fresh ginger, and dash of soy sauce.
- Toss cooked green beans with dill and lemon juice. Make an extra batch for quick cold snacks.
- Toss green beans with a little oil, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Cook in a preheated 350 F air fryer 10 minutes and serve. For extra flavor, toss with Parmesan cheese before serving.

### CHANGE IT UP

- Add chopped herbs such as basil, thyme, or parsley.
- Add ½ cup toasted sliced almonds and a little lemon zest.
- Add sliced summer squash in Step 4.

