

black bean bonanza

By Neil Zevnik

Whether in soups or stews, sautéed or roasted, we love this versatile food

Black Magic, Blackhawk, Domino, Nighthawk, and Valentine.... No, it's not a roster of code names for the next *G.I. Joe* movie or the names on the door of a trendy legal firm. These are just a few of the varieties of the nutritional powerhouse that is black beans, a staple of South and Central American cuisines for over 7,000 years. *Feijoad* in Brazil; *platillo moros y cristianos* in Cuba; *pabellon criollo* in Venezuela—these national dishes would be unrecognizable without the shiny black turtle bean.

Known as the “poor man’s meat,” black beans offer a dense, delicious, and inexpensive alternative to animal flesh. Combined with a complementary grain, such as rice or corn, black beans provide a low-calorie protein source that is essentially fat-free and loaded with a wide range of nutrients.

In Chinese medicine, the black bean is a “warming” element that tonifies the kidneys, nourishes the yin, and strengthens the blood. The intersection of those effects with Western medicine is easily seen: the magnesium in black beans improves the flow of blood and oxygen throughout the entire body, and a generous dose of polyphenols helps to prevent the oxidation of cholesterol, thereby warding off atherosclerosis.

But that’s only the beginning of the benefits to be derived from this lowly legume. The black bean has the highest concentration of cancer-fighting antioxidant compounds of any bean,

10 times that found in an equivalent amount of oranges. Its heart-healthy aspects are numerous: its high fiber content aids in preventing heart disease and helps avoid digestive disorders as well; and significant amounts of folate and magnesium guard against heart attacks.

The black bean’s soluble fiber helps to stabilize blood sugar levels—especially helpful to those with diabetes, hypoglycemia, or insulin resistance. And in addition to those slow-burning complex carbohydrates, a generous dose of iron provides a further increase in energy levels. Throw in the trace minerals molybdenum and manganese, and you can see that these tiny beans are a huge storehouse of essential nutrients.

Bringing Home the Bean

Black beans are available dried or already cooked and canned; there is little nutritional difference between the two. Canned organic low-sodium beans are convenient, though it’s cheaper to start with dried.

If you go with dried, you’ll need to go through several steps. Lay out the beans and

Continued on p. 54.

DID YOU KNOW?
When starting with dried beans, never add salt to the cooking water—it will make the beans tough and greatly lengthen the cooking time.

tangerine and black bean salad

Serves 4

This is a refreshing, quick, and light salad for any time of day. Garnish with tangerine zest.

Dressing

- 3 Tbs. tangerine juice
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbs. organic safflower oil

Salad

- 1 head Bibb lettuce, torn, or mixed greens
- 2 cups seedless tangerine segments
- 1/3 cup sweet onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup cooked black beans

1. *To make Dressing:* whisk together tangerine juice, mustard, and oil.
2. *To make Salad:* Divide lettuce among 4 plates. Top with tangerine segments, onion, and black beans. Drizzle Dressing over Salads, add salt and ground black pepper to taste, and serve.

PER SERVING: 126 CAL; 3 G PROT;
4 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT FAT); 21 G CARB;
0 MG CHOL; 231 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER;
13 G SUGARS



Photo by El Armstrong

Continued from p. 52.

pick through them, removing shriveled beans and bits of debris. Rinse them thoroughly under cold running water. They then need to be soaked one of two ways before cooking: cover the beans with 2 inches of water in a large pot, and refrigerate overnight; or bring the water-covered beans to a boil, let boil 3 minutes, and let stand 2 to 3 hours. Rinse thoroughly. Cover again with water, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 1½ to 2 hours, until beans are tender but not losing their skins. If you're using canned, just rinse thoroughly and they're ready to use—so much easier! ♦

black bean soup Serves 8

This hearty soup makes a perfect first course, or a satisfying luncheon all on its own.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 small brown onion,
peeled and chopped | 5 cups cooked black beans,
divided | 1 cup finely diced carrot, lightly
steamed to just past crisp |
| ¾ cup diced celery | 1 bay leaf | ½ cup cilantro leaves |
| 2 Tbs. olive oil | ½ cup fresh orange juice | ½ tsp. minced jalapeño chile |
| 3 cloves fresh garlic,
minced (1 Tbs.) | 4 cups organic chicken broth | 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice |
| 1 tsp. ground cumin | 1 Tbs. finely grated
orange zest | ½ cup organic low-fat
sour cream |

1. Cook onion and celery in oil in large heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cumin, and cook 1 to 2 minutes more.
2. Add 4 cups black beans, bay leaf, orange juice, and broth; bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes.
3. Remove from heat, remove bay leaf, add orange zest, and purée in batches in blender or food processor.
4. Return blended soup to pot, add remaining 1 cup black beans and carrot. Bring to a simmer, and keep warm until serving.
5. Purée cilantro leaves, jalapeño, and lemon juice in food processor or blender; add sour cream, and briefly process to blend. (This can be made in advance and refrigerated for several hours.)
6. Divide soup among 8 shallow bowls, garnish each with 1 Tbs. cilantro-sour cream (use tip of knife to make a nice pattern).

PER SERVING: 222 CAL; 11 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 33 G CARB; 5 MG CHOL; 569 MG SOD; 11 G FIBER; 4 G SUGARS

Don't Let Pain Hold You Back!



Inflammation can cause pain and disease. If you ignore the inflammation, it can get worse! Relieve the inflammation and the pain will disappear.

Phenocane:

- Helps reduce inflammation
- Has no side effects
- Helps reduce arthritis pain
- Provides Fast relief
- Helps reduce lower back pain
- Gets rid of the discomfort
- Is All Natural, and comes in Vegetarian Capsules

A friend referred me to Phenocane. I am baderline diabetic and I have Spinal Stenosis. At night, my feet would burn and I would have leg and back pain. After taking two Phenocane, the pain went away! Today I am taking Phenocane every morning and evening. I am living pain free thanks to Phenocane. - Summer

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

www.oxylifeco.com

OxyLife® Inc. P.O. Box 6451
Chula Vista, CA 91909
Toll Free: 877.982.9800 • Fax: 619.420.9214

Copyright of Better Nutrition is the property of Active Interest Media, Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.