



## Beans

Hurray for the farmers who grow beans, and supply us with this versatile and varied crop! Beans are one of the world's oldest foods, dating back nearly 4,000 years. They come in many colorful varieties, and must be picked, shelled, and dried before storage. In the Seacoast, among the varieties available are heirlooms (Marfax, True Red Cranberry, Stueben Yellow Eye), which were eaten by the native populations.

Our local beans are so much fresher than what you find on the grocery shelves. Soaking and cooking times can be reduced when preparing dishes with this local ingredient (the beans on grocery shelves can be years old and require much rehydration). Store your local beans in a cool, dry place for extended periods.

### Beans with Italian flavors

1 pound of white beans (cannelloni, soldier, Great Northern, navy or any white bean)  
Bay leaf  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 bulb fennel, chopped  
5 cloves garlic, minced  
2 teaspoons rosemary  
Salt to taste

Soak (if necessary) beans overnight. Drain and simmer with bay leaf and salt for 45 minutes (or to tenderness). While simmering, cook fennel, garlic, and rosemary at a very low heat in a pan till softened. Drain beans, and add olive oil mixture. Salt to taste.

**Baked Beans:** A New England classic. Most of the ingredients can be bought from local farms.

1 pound beans (navy is the classic bean for this dish, but use any bean you like)  
4 strips of bacon, chopped  
4 cups water  
1 onion, chopped  
1/2 cup maple syrup (Grade B is best)  
3 tablespoons mustard (brown or Dijon)  
1 tablespoon cider vinegar  
Salt to taste

Soak (if necessary) beans overnight. Drain, and put all ingredients in a heavy pot. You have options for cooking: in the oven at 350 degrees for 5 hours, simmering on the stove for 2 hours, or on top of your woodstove (all day). The idea is to get the beans tender, and to leave some saucy liquid in the pot.