

To improve the digestibility of beans *(to reduce gas problems)*

What causes the gas?
*Beans contain trisaccharides that are difficult to break down (including oligosaccharides). Healthy intestines produce enzymes that can break the trisaccharides into simple sugars. Also, because beans are rich in protein and starch (requiring different digestive environments and enzymes) this can make thorough digestion more difficult.*

Small beans and thin-skinned beans seem to be easier to digest.
- Mung beans
- Adzuki beans
- Lentils
- Split peas
- Indian pulses (urad dal, moong dal, chana dal)
- Black-eyed peas

Presoak (or even sprout) beans before cooking. Sprouting changes the composition of the beans: protein into amino acids, starches into simple sugars and fats into essential fatty acids and an increase in enzymes and vitamins. This greatly simplifies their digestion.

Always pour off soak water. The sugars (indigestible starches) which cause gas problems are water-soluble and much is washed away with this first pot of water.

Be sure beans are well-cooked. Err on the side of overcooking- they should be very tender.

Chew well. Not only does this break it down more thoroughly but allows more enzyme interaction.

Add certain ingredients that help beans become more digestible. Add garlic, ginger, or any of the following herbs: bay leaves, parsley, sage and rosemary. The following spices also help reduce gas issues: fennel seeds, cumin seeds, caraway seeds, anise seeds and ground turmeric. Not only does the addition of these herbs and spices increase digestibility and flavor, but they improve the nutritional value as well.

Sea vegetables are another great addition to the cooking pot as they tenderize the protein, decrease the overall cooking time plus improve the flavor and nutrient content of the cooked beans. Just add a four inch strip of kombu or 1-2 tsp. of kelp granules or dulse flakes to the cooking water. A little vinegar added at the end of cooking can also help.

In terms of digestibility, it’s okay to combine beans with grains and with tomatoes, but not with citrus juices.

Take a digestive enzyme with the beans to aid your digestion.

Make beans a regular part of your diet. Doing so will significantly decrease gas issues as your body will be able to form the enzymes necessary for their digestion. Begin with small quantities, increase gradually, and then continue to eat regularly. Your body will thank you for it!