

BEANS



INTRODUCTION

There are many varieties of beans, most of them can be traced back to their origins in Central and South America. Beans are the 18th most popular fresh vegetable in New Zealand.

TYPES

Snake or Chinese Beans

These green beans are similar to regular green beans but are very long (about 30–50cm). Supply is limited. They are used traditionally in Asian cooking.

Green Beans

Also known as runner, round or dwarf beans, they are usually about 10–15cm in length and 1cm in diameter, these pods are rounded. It is not usually necessary to remove any strings as these pods are quite tender. The complete pod is eaten.

Butter Beans

Similar in shape to the regular green beans but are very pale yellow/cream colour. The complete pod is eaten.

French or Flat Beans

Usually about 15cm in length, they are a flat pod with slightly ridged sides. Unless these beans are very young, it may be necessary to remove the string that runs the length of the pod. The complete pod is eaten.

Broad Beans

If the beans are immature the pod may be eaten. When fully grown the pod is not eaten and the bean inside is large and flat. The inside of the pod is soft and furry. To shell the beans quickly run a vegetable peeler down the seam.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Beans are best when they are young. Look for fresh and tender pods which make a good snapping sound when broken. Broad beans should be slightly plump with a gloss still on the skin, of a good green colour and not too big.

HOW TO KEEP

Store at 7-10°C with a relative humidity of 90-98%. Broad beans should be stored at 0-2°C. Beans are ethylene sensitive which means they should be stored separately from ethylene producing products.

Consumer Storage: Refrigerate in plastic bags. Use promptly.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Beans are a very good source of vitamin C and K. They also give you B group vitamins, vitamin A and fibre.

HOW TO PREPARE

Top and tail (cut the ends off) then slice or leave whole. French beans might need stringing - just run a peeler or knife lightly down either side of the bean. Broad beans need podding, except when they are very young.

WAYS TO EAT THIS VEGETABLE

Beans can be boiled, stir-fried, steamed or microwaved. They are great as a side vegetable and are particularly nice when sprinkled with chopped nuts or fresh herbs. Cold, raw or blanched, they are good in a salad or used as a crudite with a dipping sauce.

Broad beans are generally served as a side vegetable with a sauce -cheese, curry, mustard or herb-flavoured, or perhaps tossed in citrus juice and sprinkled with rind.

WHEN YOU CAN GET IT

Beans are available from November until May, however they are more plentiful in the summer months. Broad beans are available early in the season.

TIPS FOR RETAILING

Beans are highly perishable and are sensitive to ethylene. Keep separate from ethylene producing fruits and vegetables whenever possible. Buy small quantities regularly. Display on refrigerated shelving. Offer small pre-packs.