

Succulent Side Dishes



SCHOOL CONNECTION

Versatile rice and beans make great side dishes.

Children should have access to healthy food and be able to make healthy food choices wherever they are – at home, in school, and in the community. Improving the health of the nation’s children and reversing the childhood obesity epidemic is a shared responsibility and will take the commitment of parents, the foodservice industry, the media, and schools working together. The vision of USDA’s School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) is to improve the health of school children through better nutrition. Implementing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in school meals will have important health benefits for children.

Menu-Planning Practices for Healthy School Meals

- Increase the amounts and variety of fruits and vegetables offered because fruits and vegetables differ in nutrient content.
- Offer a dark green or deep orange vegetable three to four times a week.
- Plan a vitamin C-rich vegetable or fruit daily.
- Increase fresh and frozen vegetables as much as possible (canned vegetables are higher in sodium).
- Try using herbs, spices, and lemon in the place of salt.
- Offer more cooked dried beans and peas. Explore the great variety available.

Culinary Techniques for Preparing Dry Beans

- Wash beans thoroughly in a colander to remove all traces of dirt. Discard any damaged beans or debris. All dry beans must be soaked in water to soften the bean and remove substances in the beans that affect flavor and cause flatulence.



Soaking Methods:

Quick Hot Soak: Cover beans with water and bring to a boil. Boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover the pot and soak for one hour.

Overnight Cold Soak: Add 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ quart cold water to every 1 pound of dry beans. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

- Discard the soaking water that contains flatulence-producing sugars, and cover the beans with fresh water before cooking.
- Bring soaked beans to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Properly stored and soaked beans will be tender and ready to use after simmering for 45 to 60 minutes.
- Add 2 tablespoons of oil to the cooking water for each pound of beans to avoid foaming.
- Add acidic foods, such as tomatoes, to the beans after they are tender because acids tend to toughen the skin.
- Avoid overcooking which reduces nutrients, results in poor texture, color, and flavor.

Did you know?

Bean Math

- Dry beans will expand 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 times their original size after cooking.
- One cup of dried beans will yield 2 to 3 cups of cooked beans.
- One pound of dried beans measures 2 cups.

Rice: Brown and White

Brown rice is a 100% whole grain food and is milled to retain the rice bran layer. Whole grains are a good source of vitamins and fiber.

White rice is milled to remove the bran layer for a milder taste and texture. Try half white and half brown rice mixed to introduce brown rice to students.

Culinary Techniques for Preparing Rice

- Measure or weigh the amount of rice to be cooked. Put rice into a 12x20x2 inch pan.
- Add hot liquid to the rice. Seasoned liquid (stock or juice) add more flavor than plain water.
- Enhance the rice with onions, garlic, celery, carrots, mushrooms, herbs, spices, and other seasonings.
- Cover pans tightly and steam or bake. White rice cooks in about 25 to 30 minutes. Brown rice cooks in about 40 to 50 minutes.

Culinary Resources

National Food Service Management Institute. (1996) *Culinary techniques for healthy school meals*. University, MS: Author.

National Food Service Management Institute. (2005) *Healthy cuisine for kids*. University, MS: Author.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2007, January). *Road to SMI success*. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/roadtosuccess.html

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *HealthierUS school challenge*. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/index.html

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Beans a la Charra (Charro Beans)

Number of Portions: 100 Size of Portions: 1/2 cup

Side dishes take center stage at Irving Independent School District in Irving, Texas. This flavorful and nutritious side dish is a favorite of student and staff. It is easy to prepare and takes advantage of inexpensive and healthful dried beans. Thanks to Michael Rosenberg and his staff at the Irving Independent School District for sharing this recipe.

Ingredients	Weight	Measures	Instructions
Pinto beans, dried Water	9 pounds	4 gallons	1. Clean and wash beans a day prior to serving. Overnight Method: Add 1 ¾ quart cold water for every pound of dry beans. Cover. Let stand overnight in the refrigerator. Drain beans. Boil water (from ingredient list) and add drained beans. Simmer for approximately 30 minutes. (continue with step 2) Quick Method: Boil 1 ¼ quarts of water for each pound of dry beans. Add beans and boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to soak for 1 to 4 hour. Drain. Boil water (from ingredient list) and add beans (continue with step 2).
Turkey ham Garlic, granulated Salt Black pepper	1 pound 5 ounces	2 tablespoons 2 teaspoons 2 tablespoons 2 teaspoons 1 tablespoon 1 teaspoon	2. Add turkey ham, garlic, salt, and black pepper to beans and water. Simmer for approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours. Do not overcook beans.
Onions, chopped Tomatoes, fresh, chopped Cilantro, fresh, chopped	2 pounds 11 ounces	1 ⅓ cups 1 ⅓ cups	3. Add chopped onions, tomatoes, and cilantro to the beans and cook for approximately 30 minutes.
			4. Place beans in steam table pans. Cover with plastic film and place in warmers until serving time.

Nutrients per serving

Calories	153	Saturated Fat	.21 g	Iron	2.34 mg
Protein	9.89 g	Cholesterol	4 mg	Calcium	51 mg
Carbohydrate	26.63 g	Vitamin A	113 IU	Sodium	266 mg
Total Fat	.82 g	Vitamin C	6.6 mg	Dietary Fiber	6.56 g

For additional side dish recipes:

Source: Irving Independent School District, Irving, Texas

U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Recipes for Schools*, 2006. Includes recipes such as **Chinese Style Vegetables** and **Marinated Black Bean Salad**.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Recipes for Child Care*, 2005. Includes recipes such as **Broccoli and Cauliflower Polonaise** and **Mexicali Corn**.