GREEN BEANS

Ingredient of the Month

Presented by ACFEF Chef & Child Foundation and Clemson University
**Green beans**, also known as the “common bean,” belong to the same family—*Phaseolus vulgaris*—as shell beans, such as pinto beans, black beans and kidney beans. The main difference between green beans and other beans is they are eaten fresh and in their entirety rather than shelled and dried like many of their bean counterparts. Green beans are often referred to as “string beans” because early varieties had a fibrous string that ran along the seams of the pods—modern varieties are seamless. They are also called “snap beans” because of the sound made when they are broken in half. Other snap beans include haricots verts, pole beans, rattlesnake beans, runner beans and wax beans, all of which possess slightly different tastes and vary in color, shape and texture.

**Varieties and uses**

- **Green beans**: Though referred to as green, these slender beans with tiny seeds tucked in the pods can also be yellow or purple. When cooked, the purple beans turn green.
- **Haricots verts** (*ah-ree-koh VEHR*): French for “green string bean,” haricot meaning “bean” and vert meaning “green.” These tiny beans are picked young and prized for their slightly sweet flavor and crisp texture. They are similar to green beans, but are smaller and thinner, and cook more quickly. They can also be yellow or purple.
- **Pole beans**: This type of bean requires, as its name indicates, a pole to grow on. It climbs its support readily and allows for easier picking. These beans are longer and broader than regular green beans and may be flat or round. Pole beans taste like green beans, but they are tougher than other snap beans and need to cook longer.
- **Rattlesnake beans**: An heirloom variety of pole bean, this bean gets its name from its dappled skin. Cook them as you would other varieties of pole beans. Once cooked, these beans turn green and lose their unique coloring.
- **Runner beans**: One of Britain’s favorite green beans—often called “Kentucky wonder beans” in the U.S.—comes from a climbing plant. The scarlet runner bean has a long, thick pod that’s meaty and tender and does not have a string when young. Young runner beans may be prepared the same way as green beans.
- **Wax beans**: As a pale yellow variety green bean, their waxy texture earned them the name. Wax beans can also be purple and light green. Though not as flavorful as green beans, they can be treated like green beans for cooking purposes.

**Healthy ingredient contribution**

**Fiber**: The fiber found in green beans can help lower blood cholesterol, which can lower your risk of developing heart disease. Fiber is important because it can normalize bowel movements and prevent or relieve painful constipation.

**Manganese**: Green beans contain manganese, which aids in promoting healthy bone structure and bone metabolism as well as promoting the creation of bone-building enzymes. It is also vital in creating connective tissue.

**Silicon**: This commonly forgotten yet important mineral is found in green beans. Silicon aids in the upkeep of bone health and formation of connective tissue.

**Vitamin A**: Green beans contain vitamin A. This vitamin can promote bone growth, provide maintenance to the immune system and function in reproduction, as well as aid in vision health.

**Vitamin C**: This common and important vitamin is contained in green beans. It is a strong antioxidant that can rid your body of harmful free radicals that may lead to diseases such as cancer and atherosclerosis. Green beans have a higher antioxidant capacity than similar foods in the bean and pea family.

**Vitamin K**: Green beans are full of vitamin K, which is highly involved in blood coagulation and helps to clot blood when you have a cut or scrape on your skin. Vitamin K is also involved with maintaining bone density and reducing bone loss.
Storage
Store fresh green beans in a refrigerator—wrapped in a damp paper tower in a plastic bag—for up to 5 days.

Serving size
One cup of cooked green beans=44 calories, 0 grams fat, 4 grams dietary fiber, 2 grams protein, 17 % of the recommended daily value or DV of vitamin A and 20% of the DV of vitamin C.

Contributions for this article were made by Darrin Sorenson and the following recipe was created and tested by Clemson University’s Culinary Nutrition Undergraduate Student Research Group.

INGREDIENT OF THE MONTH
12 | AUGUST

RECIPE

GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE SUSHI

Yield: 6 rolls

Ingredients:
- 2 cups uncooked sushi or short-grain rice
- 1½ tablespoons seasoned rice vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons mirin (Japanese condiment)
- 6 nori sheets (seaweed)
- Green beans and shitake (recipe follows)
- 4 ounces low-fat cream cheese, chilled in the freezer and sliced into strips
- 1 (2.8 ounce) container french-fried onions

Method: Cook rice according to package directions. Remove from heat and stir in vinegar and mirin. Spread rice onto a baking sheet and set in the refrigerator to cool for 30 minutes. Cut off top quarter of nori sheets along short end. Place one of the nori sheets, shiny side down, on a sushi mat with long end toward you. Spread about ½ cup of the rice mixture evenly over nori with moist hands, leaving a 1-inch border on one long end of nori. Arrange green bean and mushroom mixture, cream cheese and fried onion strips along bottom third of rice-covered nori. Lift edge of nori closest to you; fold over filling. Lift bottom edge of sushi mat; roll toward top edge, pressing firmly on sushi roll. Continue rolling to top edge; press mat to seal sushi roll. Let rest, seam side down, for 5 minutes. Wet a sharp knife and cut roll in half. Then cut each half into four pieces. Continue to wet knife in between cuts to prevent sticking. Repeat procedure with remaining nori, rice mixture, bean and mushroom mixture, cream cheese and fried onions.

Nutrition Information

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Green Bean And Shiitake Mushroom Filling

8 ounces green beans, trimmed
2 teaspoons sesame oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 (3.5 ounce) package Shitake mushrooms, sliced
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
½ teaspoon rice vinegar
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add beans; cook 5 minutes. Plunge beans into ice water; drain. Place beans in a large bowl. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat; add garlic and mushrooms; sauté for 1 minute. Add beans, soy sauce, and pepper; cook 2 minutes, tossing frequently. Remove from heat.

This recipe was created and tested by Clemson University’s Culinary Nutrition Undergraduate Student Research Group.

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