

CEDAR BRAISED BEANS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Cup Dried Beans (any kind)
- 3 Cups Cold Water
- One 5-6 inch branch of Cedar
- Salt and freshly ground juniper and leek powder to taste



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DIRECTIONS

1. Wash your hands before preparing food.
2. Sort the beans and remove broken beans and clumps of dirt or stones. Put the beans in a large pot or bowl, and cover with water by 3 inches. Allow the beans to soak for at least 6 hours or overnight.
3. Drain the beans and transfer them to a medium saucepan or soup pot. Add 3 cups of cold water to the pot and lay the cedar over the beans.
4. Set the pot over high heat and bring it to a boil.
5. Cover the pot, reduce heat and let simmer until the beans are very soft. Begin tasting the beans after about 25 minutes of simmering. Remove and discard the cedar.
6. Drain and reserve the cooking liquid for soups and stews. Season to taste with salt, ground juniper and leek powder.
7. Serve the beans or store in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days or freeze.

RECIPE NOTES:

NOTES AND IDEAS

- For Maple Beans: stir in 1 to 2 Tablespoons of maple syrup OR maple sugar into the pot before removing the beans from the stove.
- For Mashed Beans: put the beans and a little of the cooking liquid into a large bowl. Using an immersion blender, a food processor fitted with a steel blade, a blender, or a potato masher, purée the beans to make a thick paste. Season the mashed beans with salt, leek powder, and ground juniper.
- If you do not have juniper, use ground rosemary and black pepper instead.
- Just a small branch of cedar adds flavor to these beans and helps to stimulate digestion and strengthen the immune system. We make up a big batch of these beans each week, then work them into a variety of dishes—appetizers, soups, and entrées. The first step is to soak the beans before cooking; it cuts the time in half. (This recipe is easily doubled or tripled.)
- “We like to use a mix of heirloom beans for a variety of colors, textures, and flavors. Because of the varied cooking times, we cook them separately and then combine them in a soup, hot dish, or salad before finishing the dish. Be sure to save the bean cooking water for a stock to use in soups and stews.” —Sean Sherman with Beth Dooley in their 2018 Beard Award-winning cookbook, *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*.

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