



Tepary beans

Tepary beans (*Phaseolus acutifolius*) are native to the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico, are extremely drought and heat tolerant, mature quickly, and are not susceptible to many common bean blights. Originally found in the mountains and canyons of the Sonoran Desert, teparies were domesticated and have been grown by native peoples for centuries. The beans are high in protein, calcium, niacin, and fiber, and low on the glycemic index, which helps regulate blood sugar.

Growing

While you can plant teparies as early as mid-May if temperatures are high and you irrigate them, the O'odham peoples typically planted them in July with the monsoons. They require soil that holds water well. Plant beans 1 to 1.5 inches deep, 4 inches apart, in rows 12 to 16 inches apart (the more room the beans have, the more they will bush out). Plant into moist soil and give them a good watering after planting. Keep the soil damp, but not wet, until all the seeds have germinated (about 4 to 8 days after planting). After the seedlings come up, water every 3 days. Once the plants are 8 inches tall, water the root area only when they look thirsty (ie- are very droopy or limp); over watering will limit bean production.

Harvesting

As soon as the pods begin to turn brown and dry out (typically in mid-September to October), stop watering. When 80% of the pods on a bush are brown, harvest the entire plant, pulling or cutting it from the ground. The remaining green pods will continue to ripen after the harvest. Let the harvested plants continue to dry for a few days until all the pods are fully dried and brown. Place them on a tarp and stomp or hit the beans from the pods. The pods should burst open easily, allowing the beans to pop out. Rake away all stems and leaves, leaving the beans scattered on the tarp. Winnow to remove any remaining chaff, leaves, and sticks by throwing the beans into the air (allowing the wind will blow away the lighter chaff, while the heavier beans will fall back down to the tarp). Or, place beans in a colander and gently swirl so the chaff and debris falls through.

Storage & Cooking

Store the beans in a dry, dark place. If they get moist, they will get harder and take longer to cook. (Note that teparies already take considerably longer to cook than a typical bean.) Teparies are most flavorful, nutty, and sweet if they are cooked slowly, and are allowed to continue to cook even after they get soft. You can store cooked beans in a refrigerator for up to 1 week or a freezer for up to 6 months. You can substitute teparies for other dried beans in any recipe (simply double amount of water and add 1 hour cooking time).

Tepary Bean Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 C cooked teparies, drained (reserve some of the cooking liquid)
- 1/3 C olive oil
- 1/3 C lemon juice
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cook beans according to basic instructions. Drain and briefly rinse. Add beans and other ingredients to a food processor. Puree using the cooking liquid to thin if necessary. Add in ingredients or garnishes based on flavors you enjoy and have in your garden. Some options include fresh cilantro, roasted chiles or red peppers, pine nuts, capers, onion greens, hot sauce or chipotle spice.

Serve with chips, veggies, or crackers. is dip also works well as a spread for sandwiches.

Tepary Bean Stew

Ingredients:

- 1 lb dried tepary beans
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp of cumin
- ¼ tsp Mexican oregano
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2-3 quarts of chicken or vegetable stock

Optional Ingredients:

2 chipotle chiles or 2 fresh chiles, chopped
2-3 carrots, chopped or grated
3-4 stalks celery, chopped
3 small tomatoes or 1 can diced tomatoes
2 red bell peppers, chopped
2 cups cholla buds, cooked
1 lb pork, deer, chicken or beef, cubed and browned in a separate skillet.

Cook beans according to basic instructions with the onion and spices. White or brown beans work well with this stew. Drain and add beans to chicken or vegetable stock for more flavor. Add a few of the optional ingredients based on what you have on hand or the flavors you like. Simmer everything together for at least 1 hour before serving.

Tepary Chocolate Brownies

Ingredients:

- 1 C cooked tepary beans, well drained
- 2 Tbsp instant coffee
- 1/2 C unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3/4 C sugar
- 3 Tbsp canola oil
- 1/2 C all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease an 8-inch square pan. Process the cooked and well drained tepary beans in a food processor until smooth. Add the remaining ingredients and pulse until just combined. Batter will be thick. Spread in the prepared pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Cool before cutting.