

RECIPE for health

JANUARY 2012 In partnership with Health4U and Culinary Services

Featured Food: GIANT WHITE BEANS



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Eating beans on New Year's Day is a time-honored way in many cultures to bring prosperity to your family. You may be familiar with hoppin' john, a dish made with black-eyed peas, traditional New Year's fare in the southern U.S. But did you know that lentils bring in the New Year in Germany, Italy and Brazil and black beans in Japan?

If bigger is better where omens are concerned, we should have it covered with giant white beans. Commonly called butter beans in the U.S. and gigandes in Greece, giant white beans are flat, kidney-shaped beans measuring about an inch in length. When fresh or frozen, they are pale green and referred to as lima beans. They turn pure white when dried. Chef's recipe calls for canned beans, usually labeled butter beans, but you can substitute cooked dried beans if you prefer. Although not widely available, I found dried giant white beans for \$1.95 per pound at a local supermarket. Look for whole beans, not broken or cracked, with smooth white skin.

Giant white beans cook more quickly than you might expect. Soaked beans will simmer to a soft buttery texture in just 45 minutes to an hour. Think of them as gentle giants. Turbulent water, extended cooking time, or any kind of rough treatment will cause them to break apart.

To cook up a batch of giant white beans, start by soaking 1 pound of dried beans in 10 cups of water in a large pot, covered and placed in the refrigerator overnight. After the long soak, drain into a colander. Place beans back in the pot along with 6 cups water and aromatics (onion, garlic, bay leaf, fresh thyme and parsley). Simmer gently for ½ hour, then add a teaspoon of salt and continue with a gentle simmer for 15 minutes more. Let the beans cool in the broth. Strain to use in the recipe. Store cooked beans in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days or in the freezer for 6 months.

Combine giant white beans with greens as in this month's recipe for an extra dose of prosperity.

Giant White Beans with Greens

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services.

4-6 Servings

- 2-16oz. cans butter beans, gently rinsed and drained
OR 3 cups cooked giant white beans
- ¼ cup julienne red onions
- ¾ cup large diced tomatoes
- 2 cups rough chopped kale
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- 3 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Shock: Also called "refresh," to quickly chill steamed or blanched food by plunging it in ice water to stop the cooking process and to set the color, flavor and nutrient content of the food.

Steam chopped kale for about 5 minutes then shock, drain and set aside. In a small bowl, whisk lemon juice with 2 Tablespoons olive oil and fresh dill to make vinaigrette; set aside.

Heat a non-stick sauté pan over medium heat; when hot, add 1 Tablespoon olive oil and red onion and sauté for about 2 minutes. Add kale and butter beans and continue to sauté for additional 4 minutes. Add tomatoes and sauté for 1 minute.

Remove from heat and add reserved vinaigrette. Gently toss to coat. Taste and season as needed with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Giant White Beans with Greens will be served for lunch at Brody Square, The Gallery at Snyder-Phillips, and Riverwalk Market on January 25.

Visit www.eatatstate.com for dining hall hours and menus.

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Also on January 25: Recipe for Health Cooking Series meets in the Brody Square Demonstration Kitchen. For details, please visit our [website](http://www.eatatstate.com) - or reserve your spot in the audience at 353-2596 or health4u@msu.edu.