



# A Question of Taste

By Hillary Keating Callaghan

## Sherry adds glamour to black beans

Last Saturday my husband and I had to go out for an hour or so at dinner time. I made dinner — a pot of lentils, fresh bread and salad — early in the day so the children could eat while we were gone.

Actually, I didn't expect them to eat too much. They view dried beans as a deprivation. I expected to come home and find the pot nearly full, with barely a ripple in the surface. Four people would swear they had each had a generous portion but no one else had any. (At least you can count on getting two meals from a dish with dried beans in it. They never tell you things like that in all those articles on stretching your food dollar.)

My husband and I arrived home for dinner about 8. I was aghast when I looked into the pot — about two heaping tablespoons were left. It had never occurred to me to place limits on lentil consumption before we left.

As I set to work improvising an instant dinner, each of the children walked through the kitchen and remarked on how much they had enjoyed the dinner and — by the way — what had we planned on eating?

**I CAN'T THINK** of another dried bean I could serve and be in danger of fork marks on my hands. Dried beans store well ("well" but not indefinitely — don't count on more than a year's storage), are inexpensive, nutritious and adaptable.

This places them in about the same position as that of the adolescent girl who is described as having "a nice personality." Both welcome a little added glamor.

Black beans can be glamorized by combining them with sherry and fresh orange sections in the traditional Cuban black bean soup. Pinto or kidney beans can be mashed and served as refried beans with a Mexican hot sauce. Almost any combination of beans can be spiked with curry and served with rice for the Indian Dhal.

In the recipe for Italian Soybeans-Grain Casserole below, soy beans are given a lift by the addition of rice, tomato sauce, crisp zucchini and cheese.

**RICE** IS traditionally served with dried beans since the protein in most legumes is incomplete and the addition of a grain results in perfect, complete protein. The addition of even a small amount of cheese further enhances the protein content of the dish.

Although the nutritional content of this particular casserole is improved by the rice and cheese, their inclusion is not essential since soybeans supply complete protein. They are also the least expensive form of protein available, so it is well worth the effort to build up a file of recipes featuring this bean.

Unlike the soybean, which is relatively bland and in need of dressing up, lentils have a distinct, peppery taste which can stand alone. One delicious, classic European dish consists simply of cooked lentils dressed with good olive oil and a splash of vinegar or lemon juice.

The recipe below is hardly more complicated than that. Since lentils need no preliminary soaking and cook in only about 20 minutes, they enjoy the unique distinction of being a dried bean that also qualifies as a "fast food."

**ITALIAN SOYBEAN-GRAINS  
CASSEROLE**  
6-8 servings

1 onion, chopped  
2 or more cloves garlic, minced or put through a press  
¼ cup olive oil  
8 tomatoes, chopped  
1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste  
1 tsp. oregano  
1 tsp. chopped fresh basil or 1 tsp. dried salt, (preferably sea salt, and freshly ground pepper to taste  
2 zucchini, sliced  
Vegetable oil  
2 cups cooked soybeans or soy flakes (2½ cup raw)  
2 cups cooked brown rice or bulgur (1 cup raw) or 1 cup each, mixed  
4 oz. Cheddar cheese, sliced or grated  
½ cup wheat germ

Saute the onion and garlic in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil until the onion is tender. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, and seasonings, then cover and simmer for 30 minutes.

Saute the zucchini in the remaining oil until just beginning to be tender and translucent. Sprinkle with a little vegetable salt and drain on paper towels.

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Product	Price	Limit
BOILED HAM	\$1.99	Limit 2 lbs.
DONUTS	\$1.49	Limit 2 Dozen

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees; oil a 2-quart casserole.

Combine the soybeans and grains with 1 cup of the sauce and spread them over the bottom of the prepared casserole. Layer the zucchini over the grains and beans. Pour on the remaining sauce. Sprinkle on the cheese, and top with wheat germ. Bake for 30 minutes.

(from "The Vegetarian Feast" by Martha Rose Shulman)

**MEDIEVAL LENTILS**  
Serves 6-8

- 2 tbsp. butter
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 1 cup lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 5 cups water
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- ½ cup long grain rice
- ¾ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground sumac (a Mid-Eastern spice) or ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. black pepper

In a large, heavy-bottomed skillet, heat oil and butter until butter melts. Add onion slices and cook slowly about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Increase heat to moderate toward the end of cooking period to brown the slices a little.

While the onions are cooking, place lentils and water in a large saucepan. Bring to boiling point, cover and reduce heat. Simmer about 20 minutes. Drain lentils and return to saucepan.  
Add above ingredients to lentils. Reserve ½ cup

of the onions and stir the rest into lentil mixture. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer about 25 minutes or until rice is tender. Spread the reserved onions over the top and serve.

(from the "The Quick and Easy Vegetarian Cookbook" by Ruth Ann Manners and William Manners)

**E**

## Forecast: drought, dry spells

What regional fluctuations in weather are on tap for the near future? These predictions come from the Climate/Food Project at the University

The summer may see another drought in the Great Plains as severe as the summer of 1980, and it could be even more destructive in the Corn Belt. The West, too, may be drier than normal next

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