



Quicker Boston Baked Beans

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WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: We love authentic Boston baked beans but don't always have the five to six extra hours they require. To get the same creamy texture fast, we first simmer dried beans with a little baking soda. The soda jump starts their softening, allowing us to shave the baking time down to two hours. We boost the flavor with well-browned salt pork, rich dark brown sugar, and beefy Worcestershire; a little Dijon mustard and cider vinegar add the requisite tang.

Serves 4 to 6

Liquids evaporate faster in the oven in heavy cast-iron Dutch ovens than in lighter pots. If you're using a heavy pot, increase the water in step 2 to 4 1/2 cups.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound dried navy beans (about 2 cups), picked over and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 6 ounces salt pork, rind removed and cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 3 cups water
- 5 tablespoons packed dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon molasses
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 4 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Bring 3 quarts water, beans, and baking soda to boil in Dutch oven over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-high and simmer briskly for 20 minutes. Drain beans in colander. Rinse beans and pot.
2. Cook salt pork in now-empty pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 10 minutes. Add onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in water, beans, sugar, 1/4 cup molasses, Worcestershire, 1 tablespoon mustard, vinegar, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and bring to boil. Cover, transfer to oven, and cook until beans are nearly tender, about 1 1/2 hours.
3. Remove lid and continue to bake until beans are completely tender, about 30 minutes. Stir in remaining 1 tablespoon molasses and remaining 1 teaspoon mustard. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve. (Beans can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.)



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