



Quicker Boston Baked Beans

June/July 2011

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.)



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Country* and *Cook's Illustrated* magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen (www.americastestkitchen.com) or Cook's Country by America's Test Kitchen on public television.