



Courtesy of America's Test Kitchen, All Rights Reserved. Photo: Steve Klise

Southern-Style Baby Lima Beans

Serves 4 to 6

Total Time: 1¼ hours

The beauty of this recipe is in its simplicity: Frozen baby lima beans are cooked low and slow, seasoned with a few strips of bacon and wedges of onion in the pot. The resulting beans and their smoky, thick, peppery broth are complex and deeply comforting. Stirring occasionally as the beans cook emulsifies the bacon fat into the broth, giving it a silky texture. This dish is great as a side or as a main course served over white rice. Do not thaw the baby lima beans before cooking.

Ingredients

4 slices bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces

4 cups chicken broth

1½ pounds frozen baby lima beans

1¼ cups water

1 onion, halved

1 teaspoon pepper

¾ teaspoon table salt

Directions

- 1 Cook bacon in large saucepan over medium heat until lightly browned and fat has rendered, 7 to 10 minutes. Add broth, lima beans, water, onion, pepper, and salt. Bring to boil over high heat.
- 2 Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until beans just begin to break down and liquid is thickened, about 1 hour (liquid will continue to thicken as it sits). Discard onion. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Peruvian Imports

Lima beans, which originated in Guatemala, have been cultivated in Lima, Peru, for centuries—hence the name—and are a staple food there. By the 1500s, what we now call Peru had found trading partners throughout South, Central, and North America and also in Europe. As the beans were introduced to North America, they were adapted into regional recipes. Many versions of Native American succotash use this large, nutritious bean. Lima beans remain especially popular in the dishes of the American South. Some cooks use the terms “lima beans” and “butter beans” interchangeably, as the two beans come from the same plant. But other cooks know butter beans as the more mature larger white beans that are typically sold dried or canned, and baby lima beans as the smaller, greener beans that are typically sold frozen or canned.

Recipe courtesy of America's Test Kitchen. All rights reserved.

Courtesy of America's Test Kitchen, All Rights Reserved. Photo: Steve Klise