

Best Baked Beans Recipe with Salt Pork: The Ultimate BBQ Side

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OVEN
300°F

TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb dried navy beans
- 8 cups water
- 1/2 lb salt pork, rinsed and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt (adjust to taste, as salt pork is salty)

Swaps and Notes:

Beans: Navy beans are the classic choice for baked beans, but great northern beans or even cannellini beans work just as well.

Salt Pork: Salt pork is what gives this recipe its distinct, rich flavor. While you can substitute with thick-cut bacon, the flavor profile will be different. Bacon is smokier, while salt pork provides a pure, savory richness.

Sweeteners: The combination of molasses and brown sugar is a must for that classic baked bean flavor. You can adjust the ratio to your liking, but don't skip the molasses—it's key to the deep color and flavor.

Mustard: Yellow mustard adds a necessary tanginess that cuts through the sweetness and richness. A bit

of Dijon can be used, but yellow mustard gives it a classic feel.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Soak the Beans (The Night Before): Rinse the dried navy beans and place them in a large bowl. Cover with plenty of cold water and let them soak overnight, or for at least 8-12 hours. This is crucial for cooking them evenly.

Parboil the Beans: The next day, drain the soaked beans and rinse them again. Place them in a large pot, cover with 8 cups of fresh water, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Drain the beans again, but reserve the liquid.

Prep the Salt Pork and Onion: Preheat your oven to 300°F (150°C). In a large Dutch oven or oven-safe pot, add the cubed salt pork. Cook over medium heat until the fat has rendered and the pork is lightly browned. Add the chopped onion and cook until it's soft and translucent, about 5-7 minutes.

Create the Sauce: Remove a few pieces of the browned salt pork to use for a garnish later. To the pot with the onion and remaining salt pork, stir in the molasses, brown sugar, yellow mustard, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper, and salt. Cook for about 1 minute until fragrant.

Combine Everything: Add the parboiled beans to the pot. Stir to coat them completely in the sauce. Pour in enough of the reserved bean liquid to cover the beans by about an inch.

Bake: Cover the Dutch oven with a lid and place it in the preheated oven. Bake for 3-4 hours, or until the beans are tender and the sauce has thickened. You may need to stir it every hour or so and add a little more reserved liquid if the beans are getting dry.

Serve: Once baked, the sauce should be thick and glossy. Garnish with the reserved pieces of salt pork and serve hot.

Tips for Success:

Don't Rush the Soak: Soaking the beans is a crucial first step. It reduces the cooking time and ensures a better texture.

Rinse the Salt Pork: Salt pork is, as the name suggests, very salty. Rinsing it helps to remove some of the surface salt.

Low and Slow is Key: The magic of baked beans happens in the oven. The low and slow temperature allows the flavors to meld and the beans to become incredibly tender without falling apart.

Adjust Seasoning: Be cautious with the salt at the beginning, as the salt pork adds a lot of flavor. You can always add more at the end.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (per serving, approximate):

Calories: 450 kcal
Carbohydrates: 60g
Protein: 20g
Fat: 15g
Saturated Fat: 5g

DIRECTIONS

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11. **Adjust : Seasoning:** Be cautious with the salt at the beginning, as the salt pork adds a lot of flavor. You can always add more at the end.
12. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This baked beans recipe is a perfect side dish for any barbecue. It pairs wonderfully with grilled chicken, ribs, or hot dogs. For a complete meal, serve it alongside some Easy Turkey Wings or with a side of cornbread. The rich, savory flavor of the beans would also complement a hearty bowl of Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo beautifully.
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15. **Protein:** 20g
16. **Fat:** 15g
17. **Saturated : Fat:** 5g
18. **Cholesterol:** 25mg
19. **Sodium:** 950mg
20. **Fiber:** 15g
21. **Sugar:** 25g
22. **Disclaimer:** Nutritional values are estimates and can vary based on specific ingredients and portion sizes.
23. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Baked beans are one of those rare dishes that taste even better the next day. Store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. You can also freeze them in a freezer-safe container for up to 3 months. Thaw in the fridge overnight and reheat on the stovetop or in the oven until warmed through.
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