



# MEXICAN RED KIDNEY BEANS WITH SILVERBEET

Season: autumn, winter, and spring

From the garden: silverbeet, onion or shallot, oregano

Type: side dish or part of main course

Difficulty: easy

Serves: 4-6 adults as side or part of main, 30 tastes in the classroom

*Recipe source: Sarah James, Owairaka District School*

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## Equipment

- Chopping board
- Knives - chef knives
- BBQ plate or oven tray
- Colander
- Kitchen spoon
- Mixing spoon
- Mixing bowl
- Clean tea towel
- Serving plate
- Side plates to serve

## Ingredients

- 2-3 cups cooked unsalted red kidney beans, or two cans of red kidney beans\* \*Note: if canned beans already contain salt, add salt to taste only at end of recipe
  - ½ onion or 1 shallot
  - 1 clove garlic
  - 6 silverbeet leaves (including the stems)
  - 1-2 stems oregano
  - ¼ cup water
  - 1 tbsp olive oil
  - 1 teaspoon salt
  - 1 teaspoon cumin
  - ¼ teaspoon chilli powder (optional, or substitute a small mild or medium fresh chilli, chopped finely)
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## How to make it:

1. Peel the onion and garlic. Roughly chop the onion and finely chop the garlic. Remove the silverbeet leaves from the stems, and finely slice the stems.

2. Remove the oregano leaves from the stem and chop the leaves finely. (Put the oregano stem into the compost).
3. Heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan. Sauté the onion, garlic, silverbeet stems and oregano with the salt\*, cumin, and optional chili powder or chili until the onion is soft, about 5-10 minutes.
4. While this is cooking, roughly chop the silverbeet leaves.
5. Add the silverbeet leaves to the pan.
6. Add the beans and water to the pan. Cook uncovered, stirring frequently, until nearly all the water has evaporated.
7. Taste and add salt if needed.
8. To serve, put the cooked beans into serving bowls.

### How to eat Mexican beans:

These Mexican red kidney beans go very well with corn tortillas, which is how beans are traditionally eaten in Mexico. In Mexico, tacos are usually made using soft corn tortillas, with a variety of fillings such as beans, meat, and/or vegetables. At Owairaka School, these beans were accompanied by hand-made corn tortillas, pumpkin roasted with dried chili, and a fresh green salsa. Delicious!

These beans could also be eaten with flour tortillas or over rice, or even made into nachos.

### Cooking dried beans:

Depending on the type of dried beans, 1 cup of dried beans will yield 2-3 cups of cooked beans. Although cooking dried beans requires preparation and planning, they are more flavourful than canned beans. Plus, it is more economical, and results in less packaging waste. You will need to do this before the session as it needs to be started the night before.

### General method of cooking dried beans:

- Soak beans overnight (8 to 16 hours) in a large bowl or pot with plenty of cold water. Dried beans will more than double in volume so make sure they have plenty of room and plenty of water to cover them (at least 5cm over the top of the beans).
- After soaking, drain and rinse the beans.

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- Put soaked beans in a large heavy-bottomed pot, again covering with at least 5cm of fresh cold water. Do not add salt at this point as it will prevent the beans from cooking properly. Bring just to a boil and then simmer with the lid on until tender (usually 2- 4 hours), stirring occasionally.
- If not using the beans right away, store them in the refrigerator in their cooking water.
- You can also save and use the bean cooking liquid as vegetable stock. Bean cooking liquid is often called 'aquafaba or 'pot liquor'. It can be used as a substitute of egg whites.