

# Black Bean, Corn, and Jicama Salad

*with* Lemon and Cilantro Vinaigrette

This salad is crunchy, colorful, flavor-packed, easily made, and good for two or three days of snacking or supplementing a meal. Leftovers are intentional. Sometimes it can be difficult to track down a happy, healthy-looking jicama but it's actually a fine salad without it. The red bell pepper is important for color, however. (For more on jicama, see final **Note**.)

*(Serves about 6 – 8)*

- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans
- 1 box (10 ounces) frozen corn (about 2 cups)
- 1 medium-sized jicama (1 – 1½ lbs)
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 cup ¼-inch diced sweet onion

1. Rinse black beans and set aside to drain very well. Place frozen corn in a strainer and thaw by running briefly under hot water while shaking the corn gently. *(Make sure corn is thoroughly drained by tossing in a colander lined with paper towels until the towels stop absorbing water. Use the same method for beans, if necessary.)*
2. If jicama (see **Note**) has tough brown skin, strip off with paring knife, and then peel once more with regular peeler. Slice into ¼-inch dice. *(You will have 2 – 3 cups.)* Dice onion and red bell pepper.
3. Combine beans, corn, jicama, onion, and bell pepper in a mixing bowl. Add vinaigrette (see below) and mix thoroughly with a rubber spatula. Cover and chill until ready to serve, mixing again just before serving.

## Lemon and Cilantro Vinaigrette

You can use this anywhere a Southwestern flourish is needed.

*(Makes about ½ cup)*

- ¼ cup lemon or lime juice
- 2 teaspoons freshly crushed garlic
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Combine all ingredients in a 2-cup measuring jug and whisk thoroughly.

**Note:**

- ▶ This salad should be lively: the beans and corn tend to absorb a lot of flavor, so don't skimp on the salt and heat.
- ▶ Green bell pepper substitutes nicely for red, but the salad could use a bit of red color. I like to peel the peppers with a regular vegetable peeler. The skins can be a bit tough and they are certainly easier to slice without their skins.
- ▶ Jicama (*HEE-kuh-mul*) is a vegetable that looks like a tan oversized turnip, has the crisp texture of a water chestnut, and a flavor that is both slightly sweet and starchy. Choose a jicama with smooth, hard skin.

## Three Bean Thing

Variations of this appear on salad bars everywhere. Something only becomes a cliché when it is used often, and it usually means that it works. You can use any beans you like but these are sturdy and still look fresh a week later. If the onion is mild I would definitely use 2 cups. Diced bell pepper of any color is a good addition (and traditional, too) if you have some. See **Note** for leftover ideas.

*(Makes about 5 cups)*

- 1 – 2 cups sweet onion, sliced in strips no more than ¼ -inch x 1 inch
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon freshly-crushed garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

- 1 can (15 ounces) red kidney beans
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- 1 can (15 ounces) cut green beans

1. Combine onion with oil, vinegar, garlic, salt, and pepper, and set aside. (This marinates the onions slightly, and makes them taste milder if they are hot. If onions are mild, I always use at least 2 cups to balance the beans.)
2. Drain and rinse kidney beans and chickpeas and set aside in colander to drain thoroughly. (Tossing beans in the colander with a dry paper towel helps.)
3. Drain green beans. (S&W cut green and wax beans are pretty if you can find them.) Combine all drained beans with onions in dressing and mix well.

**Note:**

- ▶ This makes quite a bit (it's hard to find these beans in smaller tins) but you can combine leftovers with cooked whole grain pasta spirals as a quick main dish salad. Leftovers are also a surprisingly good addition to *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* on page 190.