

# Recipes

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## Vanilla, *Vanilla* spp.

### Tips:

- When buying whole vanilla beans, the bean should be moist and pliable and not dried out or brittle.
- Store vanilla beans in an airtight container or bag in a cool dark place. Do not refrigerate.
- Store vanilla extract in a cool, dark pantry, away from heat. Do not refrigerate.
- Vanilla bean paste is a blend of vanilla bean, extract, sugar, water and a natural thickening gum.
- Substitutions:
  - 1 tablespoon of vanilla bean paste can be substituted for 1 vanilla bean.
  - A 1-inch piece of vanilla bean can be substituted for 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract.
- The deepest vanilla flavor is found within the seeds. Cut the long pod in half and using the dull side of a paring knife held flat on the bean, scrape the moist pulp and tiny seeds free from the pod.
- Infuse the seeds and beans in warm liquid such as cream or milk for 30 to 60 minutes. Strain the pod out of the liquid and add the liquid to the recipe.
- Or, add the scraped seeds directly to a recipe, such as a batter or to butter and sugar.
- Reuse vanilla beans (pods) by infusing remaining flavor into sugar, salt, poached fruit such as pears, or in bottles of vodka, rum or whiskey.
- Vanilla bean flavor characteristics:
  - Mexican vanilla – smooth, creamy, spicy
  - Bourbon or Madagascar vanilla – rich and creamy; most common in extracts
  - Tahitian – floral and fruity
- Add vanilla to chocolate-based dishes to heighten the flavor.
- Vanilla extract, per FDA standards, must have 13.35 ounces of vanilla beans per gallon during the extraction and be 35 percent alcohol.
- Grade A or Gourmet vanilla beans have about 30% moisture. Grade B beans have about 20% moisture.

### Vanilla Extract

5 vanilla beans or pods, Grade A or B

1 cup of 80 proof or 40% vodka (brandy, bourbon or rum can also be used but will include the flavor of the alcohol)

8-ounce glass bottle or jar, preferably dark in color

Split vanilla beans in half, length-wise and cut into smaller pieces as necessary to fit into the bottle. Add beans to the bottle and pour the alcohol over the beans, being sure that they are completely covered. Steep in a cool, dark place for a minimum of 4-6 weeks. Shake the bottle every few days.

Use as is or strain into a clean bottle with a fresh vanilla bean for gift giving.

## **Vanilla Sugar**

1 vanilla bean, Grade B

2 cups granulated sugar

Slice open a whole vanilla bean. Scrape the tiny seeds out of each half with the back of a knife. Add seeds and layer the bean halves in the sugar in an airtight container. Store for one - two weeks before using. Use in baked goods as a substitute for regular sugar. Use to decorate baked goods, add to beverages like coffee or tea and warm cereals like oatmeal.

**Do you have a recipe using vanilla to share?  
Please send it to [Educator@herbsociety.org](mailto:Educator@herbsociety.org)**