Bean Nutrition: What Are the Healthiest Beans?

According to research by Dan Buettner, author of "*The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest*," beans are one of the foods most associated with longevity.

For optimal health, Dan Buettner recommends eating a cup of beans each day. However, few people in developed nations today consume nearly this much.

Beans are one of the best sources of clean, whole food, plant-based protein. For people, such as athletes and seniors who might need to boost their protein intake, eating beans at most meals can be a great idea. Cooked soybeans, for example, contain almost 30 grams of protein per cup!

Then there's the fiber content of beans. And cooked split peas and lentils have approximately 16 grams of fiber per cup. As protein sources go, that's a significant amount, especially in comparison to meat, which has zero grams of fiber.

To put that into perspective, many nutrition experts believe that a 150-pound person requires about 54 grams of protein and 40 grams of fiber per day. Most people in developed nations today consume an excess of protein, yet only about 10-12 grams of fiber per day.

Beans provide an excellent source of protein and fiber, as well as nearly a full day's worth of iron. They're also good sources of B vitamins like thiamine and folate, as well as a variety of micronutrients like magnesium, phosphorus, manganese, and copper. Plus, all beans contain potent phytochemicals and can help lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some forms of cancer.