BEST IN BEANS

You can’t beat beans.

They’re rich in fiber, protein, magnesium, potassium, iron, copper, and folate, and they’re low in saturated fat, sugar, and sodium.

Well, they start out low in sodium. But every half cup of most canned beans delivers 250 to 500 milligrams of sodium. And even if you buy unsalted beans, most cans have BPA in their linings. The estrogen mimic increases the risk of behavioral problems and cancer in laboratory animals—and possibly in humans.

Solution: cook your beans from scratch if you have the time—or try Whole Foods 365 Organic No Salt Added Black, Cannellini, Garbanzo, or Kidney Beans. They’re packed in cartons rather than cans, so they’re BPA-free. Good riddance.

And they’re cheap: we paid $1.49 for a 13.4 oz. carton, which holds three half-cup servings. That’s about half the price of Eden Organic No Salt Added beans (which come in BPA-free cans).

So drain those frijoles and...

■ mix a carton of kidney beans with a vinaigrette of 2 Tbs. minced red onion, 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar, 1 Tbs. dijon-style mustard, 2 Tbs. olive oil, a pinch of sugar, and ¼ tsp. salt;

■ combine a carton of cannellini beans with 2 chopped roasted red peppers, 2 Tbs. olive oil, a spritz of lemon juice, freshly ground black pepper, and ½ tsp. salt; or

■ toss a carton of black beans with a pesto made by puréeing 1 cup of cilantro, the juice of ½ lime, 1 clove garlic, 2 Tbs. olive oil, and ¼ tsp. salt in a food processor.

Sometimes, good things come in new packages.

Whole Foods: (512) 477-4455

MACHO NOTCH-O-BELT BURGER

“A hand-pressed beef patty on a grilled Cheddar bun with lettuce, Cheddar cheese, chili, tortilla chips, sour cream, freshly made pico de gallo and jalapeños.”

Got that?

Denny’s new Macho Nacho Burger isn’t for sissies. What red-blooded American would order just a plain beef patty with humdrum lettuce, tomato, onions, and ketchup?

Real men need a burger with something more—say, another entire menu item—on top. Something like nachos…and nearly everything you can get on nachos, like cheese, sour cream, and chili. Nothing like topping your ground beef burger with ground beef chili.

The burger alone has 1,020 calories (half a day’s worth) plus 25 grams of saturated fat and 2,170 milligrams of sodium (more than a day’s supply of each). It’s equal to two McDonald’s Quarter Pounders with Cheese. And that’s without your choice of “wavy-cut French fries, hash browns, seasonal fruit or dippable veggies.” As if a Macho Nacho buyer is going to order dippable veggies.

With fries, your total comes to 1,530 calories and 30 grams of sat fat spiked with 2,280 mg of sodium. Now you’re up to three Quarter Pounders with Cheese.

Our advice: nix the Macho Nacho. Stick with the Cranberry Apple Chicken Salad, the Chicken Avocado Sandwich, or another Fit Fare Light item (they have less than 550 calories).

Denny’s is “celebrating 60 years as America’s diner.” Let’s hope its patrons get to celebrate their 60th.

Denny’s: (800) 733-6697