

## Tasty Ways To Use Jelly Beans

One of the most well-known classic candies is jelly beans. Their soft, chewy center and thin candy coating make them a timeless favorite. Jelly beans are available year-round, but they're best known as an Easter candy staple. Shaped like a bean and most commonly fruit-flavored, jelly beans have expanded to have an endless variety of flavors. Basic jelly beans come in nine colors: black, brown, green, orange, pink, purple, red, white, and yellow. In standard jelly beans, the color on the outside of the bean usually matches and indicates the flavor and color on the inside.

While jelly beans appeared in America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some historians think their roots come from Jordan almonds, which originated in the Middle East.

The first known advertisement for jelly beans was published in 1861. The advertisement for William Schrafft of Boston promoted sending jelly beans to soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, jelly beans were a penny candy and standard treat in households across America. The association of the jelly bean with Easter was firmly in place by the 1930's. For Easter each year, 16 billion jelly beans are manufactured in the United States alone.

Many "designer" or "gourmet" flavors have been introduced to the marketplace. Although the shape of jelly beans has remained the same, gourmet beans are often softer and smaller than traditional jelly beans. Jelly beans were the first candy that was sold by weight instead of being sold by the piece.

Why is this candy called jelly beans? Candymakers have always made candy into novelty shapes. Shaping candy into things people knew was, and still is, common. No one knows why the shape of the bean was chosen for these candies.

Like most candies, the main ingredients in jelly beans are sugar, corn syrup, and starch. The addition of starch to that combination creates the chewy gelatin in the middle. To make the thin, crunchy coating on the outside, confectioners use a sugaring technique called panning, which is the same process used to create the candy coating on the outside of M&Ms. It takes approximately seven to twenty-one days to make a jelly bean. There are 130 calories and 37 grams of sugar in a serving of jelly beans, which is about 35 jelly beans. Jelly beans are gluten-free, peanut-free, dairy-free, fat-free, and even kosher!

The humble jelly bean got a flavor boost in 1965. Candy manufacturer Herman Goelitz Candy Company, revitalized the traditional favorite by offering more variety of colors and flavors. They may have altered the jelly bean's color and flavor, but they kept the unique bean shape of the candies. Later, the Herman Goelitz Candy Company became the Jelly Belly Company.

President Ronald Reagan loved jelly beans. The Jelly Belly Company added the flavor Blueberry, upon his request, for his inauguration. During President Reagan's first inauguration in 1981, over three tons of jelly beans were ordered and distributed. While Blueberry was President Reagan's favorite flavor of Jelly Belly's, Very Cherry has consistently stayed at the number one flavor, except for being bumped from its spot from 1998 to 2003 by Buttered Popcorn flavor.

Jelly beans are a sweet treat all on their own, but can also be added to desserts and other treats for a colorful blast of sweetness. The possibilities are endless when thinking of recipes jelly beans can be used to enhance. For example, have you ever considered adding jelly beans to any of these foods?

- Beverages
- Smoothies
- Bark candy
- Fudge
- Rice Krispie bars
- Blondies
- Brownies
- Cold or hot cereal
- Trail mix
- Popcorn
- Popcorn cake
- Bird nest/haystack cookies
- Chocolate chip cookies
- Coconut macaroon cookies
- Cakes
- Cake decorations
- Cookie decorations
- Donuts
- Sugar cookies
- Oatmeal cookies
- Pancakes
- Gelatin cups
- Pudding
- Jelly bean dessert pizza
- Nut butter sandwich
- Whipped cream
- Dessert dip
- Ice cream

With countless flavors of jelly beans, and so many creative ways to incorporate them into other recipes, their popularity is sure to remain timeless. Jelly beans are no longer just a filler for Easter eggs so use them any way you please!

(Sources: [historydaily.org](http://historydaily.org); [www.jellybean.com](http://www.jellybean.com); [www.tropicalfoods.com](http://www.tropicalfoods.com))