

## LIMA BEANS

**Also called butter beans** down South, lima beans come in two major varieties: baby limas and the plumper, larger Fordhook. The rich, nutty legumes are a key ingredient in succotash, a traditional Native American dish. Limas are available fresh only in summer and early fall, so now's the time to seek them out. —KATE PARHAM

### HOW TO SELECT AND STORE

Look for fresh lima beans at a farmers' market or roadside stand, says Emma-lea Garver Ernest, a researcher at the University of Delaware's Extension Vegetable Crops Program. Choose bright-green pods; avoid those that are damaged or limp. You may want to buy baby limas shelled since they're more of a challenge to shell than larger beans. Store limas in the fridge in a breathable bag until you're ready to use them. "They'll last for two weeks in their pods, or one week if they're shelled," Ernest says.

### PREP TIPS

Wash the pods, then simply twist and they will pop open, allowing you to extract the beans, says Ernest. Never eat the pods; they're too fibrous. Simmer the beans in water on the stove until tender, about 15 minutes, and they're ready to go. Enjoy with a bit of butter and salt, or add to soups and stews.

### TRY THIS

**Purée** cooked lima beans with olive oil, garlic, red pepper flakes, and lemon juice for a zesty bean dip.

**Go Mediterranean** and bake limas with feta, tomatoes, and olives.

**Blend** limas with garlic, green tomatoes, olive oil, and vinegar for an elegant take on gazpacho.