

Free | Summer 2020

grassroots

A Quarterly Newsletter from People's Food Co-op



Board of Directors

Get in touch with your Board of Directors! To email all Directors: bod@peoples.coop

Eleanor Escafi
eleanor.escafi@peoples.coop

Chris Eykamp
chris.eykamp@peoples.coop

Will Newman
will.newman@peoples.coop

Brion Oliver
brion.oliver@peoples.coop

Claire Tenschler
claire.tenschler@peoples.coop

Debra Torres
debra.torres@peoples.coop

Sarabell Eisenfeld
sarabell.eisenfeld@peoples.coop

Attend a Board Meeting!

Board of Directors meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of every month from 6-8:30pm. You're welcome to join us at 5:30 to eat and chat! Member-Owners are always welcome! This is a great chance to get your message to the Board or just to see what's going on at the Co-op. **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings may be held online via Zoom, or may be rescheduled. Find updates on our website at peoples.coop/from-the-board.**

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, August 25th, 6-8:30pm
Tuesday, September 22nd, 6-8:30pm
Tuesday, October 27th, 6-8:30pm

grassroots

Editors

Gabi de León, Marketing & Design Manager
Ashley Todd, Co-Manager
Amina Rahman

Contributors

Naoki Yoneyama
Makayla Micheal
Isaac Kwasi Obeng & Sadie Gordon
James Holland
Brita Zeiler
Gabi de León
Members of the Collective Management

Printed locally by Oregon Lithoprint.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used without prior permission from the editor. The opinions expressed in Grassroots are those of the authors and not necessarily of the Board, staff, or owners of People's Food Co-op. Nutrition and health information given is for educational purposes only and is not meant as a substitute for a consultation with a licensed health or dietary practitioner.

© 2020 People's Food Co-op



from the board

In 2019 People's made a small profit, so we are pleased to announce that Member-Owners will receive a dividend for your membership and patronage of the Co-op, one of the benefits of being a Member-Owner.

As stipulated in our bylaws, People's will mail you a check based on the amount of money your household spent at the store in 2019.

Patronage dividends are just one way that co-ops are different from traditional business models. Rather than accumulating profits over time, co-ops return those profits to our owners – you. The more you shop, the more you receive. The last time Member-Owners received a patronage dividend was in 2016, based on 2015 net profits. 2019 was a growth year because of the hard work of the Collective Management, who achieved a profit while continuing to advance their work on community resources and organizing, social justice, and long-term planning for the Co-op. We commend each of them for this achievement. Thank you, Collective Managers!

As the Board we decided to disburse 100% of the eligible funds back to you. We know the check you receive may be small, but we hope that in this moment it will help, and will serve as a reminder of our gratitude for your key role as owners of this business.

Here are some quick details on the 2019 patronage dividend:

- Total 2019 patronage eligible Member-Owner sales were \$30,566
- If your dividend amounts to less than \$3.00, it will be retained by the co-op since it would cost the co-op more than \$3.00 to print and send you a check (as specified in Article VIII, Section 8.3 of our Bylaws).

Thank you for shopping at People's, thank you for being a Member-Owner, and thank you for being a part of our community.

In cooperation,

**People's Food Co-op
Board of Directors**

The Co-op as a Compass

Looking to People's as a compass for our community after the pandemic

by Naoki Yoneyama, Former Board Member

Being confined has a way of causing us to question things. Like artists locked in a cabin, we are looking at the world and reflecting. Some are wondering whether their long commutes are worth not spending time with families and friends. Others are reconsidering whether it's worth flying to exotic destinations when they don't know their neighbors and the community they live in.

At the same time, some are saying that nothing will change once Stay at Home orders are over, that the world will go back to "business as usual." We are struggling to imagine that society can be different after this crisis, even as we reckon with just how unbalanced our way of life may be.

Co-ops, though, can be an antidote to resignation and catalysts for important change. In the '60s and '70s, co-ops were at the forefront of reimagining the food system. They sold healthier food, redistributing a larger share of their profits to farmers. They modeled democratic governance, and helped educate their communities about challenges in the food system. Today, some of what co-ops pioneered has become mainstream: organic food, farmers markets and food labels (thanks to the fair labelling act of 1966).

Food co-ops have been a compass for what our food system could look like, and People's can be one for our post-COVID community – a compass that helps us balance our relationships with community, democracy, nature and work. As we think about the future we want to build, we can look to People's for inspiration and wisdom in three areas:

Democratic Workplaces & Governance

There can't be lasting systemic change without better representation in our organizations and communities. People's is offering 2 important models: first, the Co-op is managed collectively by 23 co-managers working together in a non-hierarchical structure, bringing social justice and equity into the workplace in a real sense. Second, this year we introduced random selection into the process for finding candidates for the co-op's Board and committees. This is bringing new people to the table, folks who would usually not self-select, and deepening democracy.

Anti-Oppression Work

The Co-op is showing how anti-oppression work can be integrated into running a grocery store through the Safe(r) Space Policy inside the store that takes seriously our interactions with one another; investing in Anti-Oppression training and work with staff; and a wage scale that values all work equally. The Board also created a subgroup that focuses on Anti-Oppression with its first task being proposing a conflict resolution policy including the notions of power and privilege. The Nominations & Member Engagement Committee introduced questions related to Anti-Oppression in the nomination process this year to ensure that candidates are willing to learn and reflect on oppression. Examples of oppression that the committee listened for people's awareness of are racism, ableism, sexism, transphobia, etc. These systems impact how Board members will treat each other, Member-Owners, and co-managers, how they will hear and seek to understand each other, and how they will consider these systems when writing and monitoring policies and visions for the Co-op.

Working in a Sustainable & Healthy Way

Our society grinding to a halt is reminding us of the possibilities to reduce pollution when we collectively work less, and simultaneously the vital need for work at a living wage. The Co-op is showing the way forward by scheduling co-managers for 32 hours a week, with full benefits and at a starting wage of \$15/hour. We are reminded that it is possible to operate large organizations, like a grocery store, without making workers work extreme hours. These jobs are more sustainable for workers, encourage a more healthy work-life balance, and reduce pollution on a macro-scale. Many other countries have shorter workweeks: I grew up in France where workers were only allowed to work 35 hours per week and were required to have a minimum of 5 weeks paid vacation, often more. Shortening our workweeks allows us to do what is necessary for our jobs and to re-orient towards the other more important things in our lives.

As we move through this pandemic and build a new normal for ourselves, we can use these initiatives to challenge the status-quo and build a society that is more fair, sustainable and democratic.



Black Futures Farm

by Makayla Micheal, Co-Manager

“Land has been the root of dominion and as such is the root of revolution and self-determination. Displacement pre- and post-colonialism continues to deracinate our ability to take root, reclaim, liberate exploited land and call it home. Our connection to, relationship with and access to land is an essential source of our healing, power and ultimately our liberation. As land based indigenous people, Black communities have a deep connection to the earth with land as a source of spiritual, economic, cultural and communal grounding.”¹

We sit now on land that was stolen from the Indigenous and built upon with free labor through the enslavement of Black folk – both of which helped to elevate the current systems and continues to uplift those who benefit from that dominion. Black folk are tied to the land. We have spent centuries nurturing the land but we now face many barriers that leave us out of the conversation about what food sovereignty looks like. Black folk are heavily impacted by food scarcity and we stand in front of barriers of constant upheaval that leave us with little access to have relationships with the land. Land control is an ongoing issue. From 1920 until now, we have seen the number of Black farmers go from about one million, 14% of the farming population, to forty-five thousand today, about 1.3% of farmers. This has led to an estimated eleven million acres of lost land through the means of disenfranchisement, discriminatory loan practices, discriminatory taxing practices, manipulation of information, intimidation, and straight up theft.

The space we sit on specifically, the northwest, is land Black folk were never allowed to be on. Exclusionary acts prevented Black folk from moving into Oregon starting in the 1840s and prevented us from access to the 650 acres given to white folk by the government.² Today, Black folk make up about 3% of Oregon’s population. The work around convening as Black folk, as Black farmers in particular, is important to make spaces for ourselves because there have been so many instances of Black folk being excluded from this land. In a land booming with an extensive food grower movement doing active work to exclude Black folk from creating spaces for themselves, we are doing revolutionary work.

Today, to be a Black farmer is to lay roots in a space our ancestors were forced to be in. We face barriers that explicitly state we are not welcome. We have historically been set back in our ability to provide generational wealth and legacies, and continue to be. We are back in the soil our ancestors were

¹ See Black Food Justice Rationale Strategy for a comprehensive look at the ties between Black Liberation and Food Justice for Black folks- <https://www.blackfoodjustice.org/rationale-strategy>

² The US Government granted 640 acres to each missionary station in Oregon. The Donation Land Act of 1850 also granted 320 acres of free land to white males, and an additional 320 acres if he was married. Coleman, Kenneth R. “White Man’s Territory: The exclusionary intent behind the 1850 Donation Land Act.” *Oregon Humanities*, 2018. <https://www.oregonhumanities.org/rll/magazine/owe-spring-2018/white-mans-territory-kenneth-r-coleman/>



“To be a Black farmer in these times is a revolutionary act. We are creating self sufficiency and community for ourselves. We are doing the work of finding each other and deciding to work together to feed our people – bringing food sovereignty – and laying down roots for those that will come after us.”

forced to work, building again our relationship with the earth we spent centuries building. We have long been stewards of the land. To be a Black farmer in these times is a revolutionary act. We are creating self sufficiency and community for ourselves. We are doing the work of finding each other and deciding to work together to feed our people – bringing food sovereignty – and laying down roots for those that will come after us. Black liberation looks like being able to create self reliance, to be able to feed ourselves.

Farming is dynamic work, involving many moving parts: the planning, the marketing, the work with the actual land, the work with the people, and distribution. In the times of a pandemic, the layers began to grow. We are doing work to bring food to a food scarce population. Black communities have been hit the hardest by the pandemic and food security has always been an issue that has impacted folks of color the hardest. We are now fighting both the right to bring food and self-sufficiency to a population that struggles with food access and now struggles with being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Black Futures Farm, a vegetable farm right here in Southeast Portland, was born from the work of the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition. Black Futures Farm is both a concrete standing farm and an ideology of Black folk coming together and reworking the land black folk have been working for a long time since. Black Futures Farm is “a group of Black identified/Diasporic and Continental African people working together, growing food and community.”³ The aim of Black Futures Farm is community-based, to bring food to black families in the area, and doing the work of structuring a member-owned collective model, dispersing profit through those that put their time into the farm.

Last week at the farm, we planted okra, cucumbers, winter squash and melons. This week we harvested collards. We spent a weekend setting up a melon field. We waited for our soil test to arrive and we mixed sulfur into the dirt. There is a certain flow to the farm. We convene, we spend time with the plants, the northwest weather in the summer moves from sun to overcast, we meet again, we rest, we go back to the plants, we leave the farm, and then we come back again to meet the next day. We work to grow food and we work to teach other black folk in order to bring autonomy in providing for our needs outside of a white supremacist capitalist system and bridging the gap to food access. We follow in the footsteps of a number of enslaved Africans of the early 19th century who sold produce from their personal gardens to buy their freedom.⁴ We continue the work of nurturing Black folks’ relationship with the land.

“Transforming society requires deep and sustained ideological and strategic mass based organizing, and those tactics have always been at the center of confronting and shifting power shifting in black communities, emerging the collective wisdom of the grassroots into strategies that uproot and dismantle systems of oppression.”¹

You can support Black Futures Farm and the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition by providing reparations to members of Black population of Oregon as they begin to work back to their relationship with the land by providing reparations through donations at <https://blackfoodnw.org/donate/>. The CSA hopes to provide food to other members of the Diaspora in the Northwest. Another way you can support is sponsoring a Black family in order to provide them a CSA share in order to bridge the gap of accessibility.

³ See Black Futures Farm FAQ - <https://blackfutures.farm/faq/>

⁴ Covey, Herbert C., and Dwight Eissnach. *What The Slaves Ate: Recollections of African American Foods and Foodways from the Slave Narratives*. Greenwood Press, 2009.

Revolutionizing Service

Strengthening community through our culture of interaction

by Members of the Collective Management

People's Food Co-op was founded 50 years ago out of a movement that emphasized the importance of natural, local, and organic foods and community control over our food. These days, virtually every grocery store features some selection of natural, local, and organic foods while claiming to be the "local neighborhood store," creating lots of competition for community-owned food co-ops. But many of these grocery stores – especially if they're part of a giant corporate grocery chain, or locally owned by one very rich person – will never be for the community and by the community, like co-ops are. Food co-ops are community hubs and resources, and the folks that work, volunteer, and shop at them share visions for how to feed their communities without relying on big corporations.

As we reflect on 50 years of cooperation and "feeding the revolution," we recognize that our strength is in our community. And as we look forward to our next 50 years, we hope to create connections among our community members,

including shoppers and workers, that are stronger, more human, and more real. We believe that one way we can cultivate this robust sense of community is through shifting our customer service culture. In this piece, we'll take a look at People's Ends that guide this vision, share about People's current customer service culture and policies, review aspects of standardized customer service culture that we're working to change, and offer ways we can all co-create a safer and more welcoming community within our store.

Creating a Safe & Welcoming Community Where All are Valued

Our Ends¹ guide everything we do at the Co-op – from day-to-day interactions to policy-making to big projects and long-term plans. Three of the Ends in particular relate to this conversation of creating a stronger and more human community:

Right: photos of the Co-op and staff from the archives.



"a passionate community working together for... human rights, social, and economic justice," "a safe, welcoming community where all are valued," and "a democratic workplace where all workers' voices are valued."

We are looking to more actively engage in meeting these specific Ends, and we are calling for more self-reflection and personal participation among community members, including shoppers and workers. Workers and shoppers alike turn to People's as an alternative to extractive, exploitative and unjust systems of exchange. We want – and even expect – to find refuge in the Co-op from larger systems of oppression at play in our society. Unfortunately, white supremacy, transphobia, xenophobia, and patriarchy exist and operate here within our Co-op community as well. People's does not exist in a vacuum, and these dynamics aren't "left at the door." But we strive to erode and undo inequity, violence, and injustice in our lives and our relationships.

One challenge we encounter in this work is that we all have different levels of experience with and education about forms of oppression and how they show up on micro and macro scales. When people experience harm, good intentions or lack of awareness on the part of people who cause it doesn't lessen its impact. Which is why we're asking our Co-op community to consider: what does it mean to be a safe, welcoming community where all are valued? This question is always relevant, but especially at this time, when it's coming to light just how much injustice and oppression continues to operate in our communities, this country, and the world.

Dismantling Power Dynamics in Customer Service

Under capitalism, making money and generating profit is paramount. We try to enact more just means of exchange through our cooperative business model, and prioritize other values in our decision making. But at the end of the day, the Co-op still relies on money to pay our bills, sell and buy our groceries, and pay our workers. The power of money in our business also shows up in our expectations and experiences of customer service.

Most of us have probably heard the phrase “the customer is always right,” which implies that since the customer has the money and the business is trying to make sales, the workers should make sure the customer gets whatever they want, no matter the cost to the worker. For example, it is common for workers throughout the service and retail industries to be yelled at by customers. And while there are lots of folks in our community who really care about our workers, unfortunately this and other classist ways of interaction show up at our Co-op, too.

This imbalanced power dynamic is one that we, as a community-owned and human-scale business, wish to interrupt. Workers are dignified members of our community too, and a spirit of cooperation reminds us that all parties must work together. We want our shoppers and workers to engage as people co-creating an alternative to the dehumanizing, hierarchical, profit-driven corporate food system – a business where workers can show up in their full humanity and dignity while working in service to the Co-op and the community.

People’s Customer & Community Service Expectations

So as People’s intentionally challenges traditional corporate customer service, what does our model look like? Our role as Co-op staff is to support our community members in getting the food they need. We’re here to:

- Help you find what you’re looking for in the store and process your transactions.

- Hold knowledge about the products in the store and answer your questions about them, or direct you to someone who can.
- Create a safe and welcoming environment for our community, per our Safe(r) Space Policy.² This includes communicating boundaries, such as confronting oppressive behaviors in the store to make this place safer for staff and shoppers who are impacted by systemic oppression.
- Receive feedback about how the store is operating.

Our workers are members of the People’s community too, and come from all sorts of experiences and backgrounds. We don’t expect workers to check our emotions, identity, or humanity at the door, and we do not have an expectation that our staff will always be smiling. We are asking the community to join us in releasing that expectation, and acknowledging that sometimes we have bad days too! We also know how taxing it is on service workers’ bodies and spirits to force a smile for hours on end.³

Requests of our Community

We’ve compiled a list of requests for our community member, based on all-too-common behaviors that we witness and experience here. Our intention is to make People’s a safer and more welcoming community for everyone, especially for those most impacted by systems of oppression in the world at large. We recognize that we all have different levels of familiarity, lived experience, and education around white supremacy,⁴ but we hope that our community (workers, Member-Owners, and other

community members alike) will meet these requests with an openness to learn and reduce harm they may cause without even realizing it.

- Please refrain from commenting on workers’ (or other shoppers’) bodies, appearance, or tattoos. Regardless of your intent, this can feel objectifying and perpetuate harmful power dynamics.
- Please do not touch workers’ or community members’ bodies, hair, accessories, etc., even if you think you’re doing it in a friendly way. It’s not okay to touch others without their consent.
- Please refrain from assuming that we know how to speak languages other than English based on how we look. Please don’t start talking to us in that language assuming that we know how to speak it.
- Please refrain from asking workers to explain their identities, such as their ethnicity. While a worker may be interested in chatting with you about this in certain settings, it is beyond the scope of customer service in a workplace and grocery store.
- Please do not take pictures of staff (or anyone in the store).
- Please refrain from gendering us.⁵ We have reminders of this posted at the registers.
- Please recognize that if a worker communicates that an action you did was harmful to them or to another person, we’re not trying to embarrass you – we’re just trying to lessen the harm that happens in our space. And that begins with communicating what isn’t working.

Being on the receiving end of these experiences day after day is not only harmful and exhausting for our coworkers, it’s also beyond the scope of customer service. Things within the scope of customer service include: asking us how to shop at the Co-op and where to find things, asking for a sample if you’re curious about a product, and letting us know what you love about our store, as well as your requests, feedback, concerns, and complaints about it.

We recognize that many businesses don’t go so far as to create these kinds of agreements! But our Ends motivate us to do a lot of things most businesses don’t do, including shifting our expectations and culture around customer service so that everyone who works, shops, and spends time here can feel welcome.

Some of you may read this and feel surprised or unsure of how to meet these requests. Others may feel relieved and like you’ve been wanting to read this for a long time. However you feel, we thank you for considering what we’ve shared here, and working with us to co-create a safe & welcoming community where all are valued. Together, we can lessen the harm that happens in our space and build a stronger, more resilient and supportive community to carry our store into the next 50 years!

If you have any feedback or questions about this article, please email our Community Engagement Team at cet@peoples.coop.

¹Our Ends can be found on our website: <https://www.peoples.coop/who-we-are>.

²You can find our **Safe(r) Space Policy** on our website at www.peoples.coop/who-we-are

³It can be very taxing on service workers’ bodies and spirits to force a smile for hours on end. This article offers some information about this: “Fast Food Industry Demands ‘Emotional Labour from Employees”, *Psychology Today*, Oct 5, 2016. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-about-trauma/201610/fast-food-industry-demands-emotional-labour-employees>.

⁴“White supremacy” is defined as the belief that white people are superior to those of all other races. Here, we are using the ‘white supremacy’ as an umbrella term for racism, patriarchy, trans-antagonism, homo-antagonism, and xenophobia.

⁵“Gendering” means to associate someone with a specific gender based on how you perceive them. Please refrain from referring to workers and other community members using gendered language, such as “he,” “she,” “that man,” “that woman,” etc. Instead, please refer to folks using gender-neutral language like “they,” “them,” “that person,” etc.

Nana's Shea Butter



**by Isaac Kwasi Obeng & Sadie Gordon,
Partner Proprietors of Nana's Shea Butter**



Left: Isaac and his Nana. Top: shea tree. Bottom: fresh shea nuts.
Photos by Francis Nsiah.

Nana's Shea Butter origins are rooted in my childhood in Ghana, West Africa. I grew up in a small savannah village called Debibi, surrounded by wild expansive canopies of shea trees. During my childhood, I often rested under old shea trees that thrived throughout the region.

I helped my grandmother, mother, and village elders collect shea nuts under the old-growth shea trees. My grandmother, whom I call Nana, taught me how to use shea to make soap, hair and body butters, and even oil for cooking. From my Nana, I also learned the importance of shea in my culture and environment.

The African Shea Tree is indigenous to West Africa and thrives in arid environments without fertilizers. It is sacred in my Nafana tribe because of its versatility and abundance. It is taboo to kill the tree without a ceremonial offering to Mother Nature. Not only does shea provide for humans, the hardy tree plays an essential ecological role on the African savannah. This tree provides habitat for other native species, as well as transpiration, shade, and soil erosion protection with its robust roots.

Tragically, shea trees are being cut down at an alarming rate to make charcoal for fuel. I am saddened when I return to Debibi and see fewer and fewer old growth shea trees while the village consequently becomes hotter and dryer.

The long and laborious process of collecting, shelling, and producing the shea is traditionally upheld by women. Women are usually paid very little for this work. Women earn more money by cutting down the trees than by making and selling shea butter. Rural community members, especially women, need to be paid a living wage for the production of their shea butter in order to discourage rapid deforestation and the devastating ecological effects it has on the region.

As a local Ghanaian, I am able to connect directly with women shea foragers and cut out the multiple middlemen who control and profit from the shea business in Ghana. By eliminating intermediaries, I am able to pay the local women exponentially more than the local rate for their shea butter, thus supporting the regional economy, shea tree protection, and the human right to a livable wage.

I buy directly from shea foragers on each visit to Debibi. Nana's Shea Butter is hand-processed by local Ghanaian women and is 100% organic.



As a result of being hand-processed, the shea retains its many beneficial properties. The nutty aroma, beige color, and creamy consistency are unique to unrefined shea. As a result of being hand-processed, there are often dark flecks of the shell and chaff in the nut butter, both of which signify a pure and unrefined product.

I return to Ghana frequently where my siblings, mother, and Nana still reside. In fact, my Nana just turned 104 and is still vibrant and sharp. I continue my commitment to the Debibi community and the greater Brong-Ahafo region. I return five percent of the proceeds directly back to the women who provided the shea butter to support female-led businesses in Ghana. As our small enterprise grows, my wife and business partner, Sadie, and I plan on turning Nana's Shea Butter into a nonprofit organization supporting shea foragers in Ghana. Thank you for supporting our grassroots business!



Top right: Akosia, a local shea forager and supplier for Nana's Shea Butter, photo by Francis Nsiah. Bottom left: women sorting shea nuts in Ghana, photo by Axel Fassio/CIFOR.

Shea Butter-based Underarm Ointment

by James A. Holland, Co-Manager

Empower your armpits with this gentle recipe that changes with the seasons. Exercise your vomeronasal creativity by blending your favorite essential oils to create new scents for every batch.

This is a basic, open-ended recipe. Experiment by modifying this base recipe with your own additions and exclusions, especially for those with sensitive skin. See notes below.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon Nana's Unrefined Shea Butter
- 2 teaspoon vitamin-E rich oil (such as avocado or jojoba oil)
- 1 teaspoon arrowroot powder
- ≤ 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ≤ 10 drops of your favorite essential oil(s)
- Small container with lid

Instructions

Add shea butter to small saucepan over low heat until butter is just hot enough to become fully liquified. Reduce heat to low.

Add oil to melted shea and mix. Add arrowroot and baking soda. Whisk thoroughly until liquid is consistent.

Allow mixture to remain on low heat for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly to promote ingredient integration. Do not allow the mixture to boil.

Remove from heat. Add essential oils, if using, and mix thoroughly.

Pour mixture into small container. Place container in refrigerator or freezer for about 15 minutes. Remove to shake every few minutes to dissuade ingredient settling until the product has solidified.

Apply a small amount of product to your underarms as often as you like. It does not take much and you may be surprised at how long such a small batch of product will last. Consider using less baking soda or essential oil if you experience skin irritation.

Nana's Shea Butter is available in the Personal Care section for \$13.99/jar.

Bean Basics & Herbal Digestibility Remedies

by Brita Zeiler, Bulk Herb & Tea Buyer, Co-Manager

Beginning the moment our lives were abruptly disrupted by coronavirus, nutritious shelf staples like rice, beans, and grains started flying out of our bulk bins like never before. As the shift in priorities toward affordability, nutritional quality, and shelf stability took hold with so many unknowns in the moment, beans emerged as a must-have food – a trend that has admittedly, always been popular with our shoppers.

But what was the consequence to all this bean cooking? Switching to a bean heavy diet overnight, let alone while learning how to cook beans for the first time, has inevitably led some to digestive discomfort. This article is intended to help set you up for success in both a delicious pot of beans, and digestive harmony.

Brita's Basic Bean Formula

Step #1: Soaking

Soak beans in salted water (2 teaspoons/quart water) for 12 hours in the fridge. The water should cover the beans by 2-4 inches. Remove any bean skins and debris that float to the top of the water. Strain, and soak for another 12 hours in fresh salted water. Soak for 24 hours total (a little more or a little less won't hurt).

Step #2: Start Cooking

Cover beans with 1-2 inches of unsalted water or stock of your choice. The more volume of liquid you use to cook in, the more diluted the flavor, nutrients, and color are dispersed into the cooking liquid. This is ideal for soups, but if you want to preserve the color of your beans, cook with less water and on a low temperature for a longer period of time, making sure to check periodically and adding more liquid if needed. You can also use a crockpot on the "low" setting for a few hours, or "warm" overnight.

Step #3: Spices, Herbs, Veggies

Add flavoring elements to the pot after bringing nearly to a boil, then turn heat down to low. Use a variety of aromatics or scraps you have in the fridge/freezer. I like using a mortar and pestle to grind whole yellow mustard seed, fennel seed, and caraway seed, peppercorns, kombu seaweed, and fresh garlic. Things you can also add: a ¼ cup of oil/fat, chopped vegetables, diced parsley or cilantro stems, a parmesan rind, meat bones, citrus peel, and any other fragrant herbs or spices.

Step #4: Simmer till Done

Let cook until totally tender on low heat; adding salt at the very end of cooking. There should be no crunchiness to the bean – you are looking for a totally smooth interior. Digesting undercooked beans is challenging for the body, and a common culprit for gas. Cook time depends on: the variety

of bean, how long it was soaked, and other factors like how old the bean is, and if the bean was soaked in salt, baking soda, or seaweed.

Sometimes beans refuse to soften when cooked. This doesn't reflect your cooking acumen, but is related to the length of time beans have been sitting around since they were harvested. The longer they sit in storage, the longer it takes for them to cook. Fortunately, People's works with farms and distributors with quality and freshness in mind, and our bulk bins are refilled daily.

Legumes in the Spotlight

Cranberry Beans have a soft, creamy texture and rich flavor. They pair well with wilted bitter greens, and add a satisfying depth to casseroles or meatless dishes.

Orca Beans are incredibly beautiful and a delightful small bean. Highlight their contrasting colors in a bean salad, soup, or stew by cooking with a low temperature, making sure the pot doesn't come to a rolling boil. This prevents the beans' skins from bursting, and keeps the speckled pattern intact.

Supporting Digestion with Herbal Remedies

Digestive bitters are a tried and true way to gently support digestion. By taking a few drops directly on the tongue, or a dropper in a few ounces of water, the bitter flavor of the herbs stimulates our digestive juices to start flowing. The bitter flavor also signals the body to relax, allowing for a more enjoyable eating experience.

There are endless combinations of bitter and aromatic herbs that can make up a digestive bitter blend. Bitter herbs taste, well, bitter, and have a stimulating effect on the digestive system. Some common bitter foods we are accustomed to include coffee, chocolate, tea, and lettuces. Easy to grow bitter plants include chamomile, dandelion, and

artichoke. Aromatic herbs are rich in volatile oils that have antibacterial and antiviral properties that can support the gut flora and digestive system. Think strong flavors and scents like rosemary, thyme, ginger, cardamom, etc. Aromatic herbs have a carminative action, meaning they help reduce gas and bloating. A perfect pairing when eating beans!

Go ahead and get creative when making bitters, and learn about the plants you are formulating with. It is important to make sure that the flavors and actions in the blend you create is something you feel drawn to, so that the ritual of taking bitters is a practice of enjoyment, care, and connection, rather than an obligatory routine.

Brita's Basic Bitters Formula

Combine the following herbs, fresh or dried, in an 8oz jar (as always, feel free to substitute or exclude any herbs, this is just an outline)

- 1 teaspoon fennel seed
- 1 teaspoon cardamom pods
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- 1 tablespoon orange peel
- 1 tablespoon chamomile flower

Cover herbs with brandy or vodka and put on the lid tightly. Label with the date and herbs--don't skip this step, you will thank yourself later.

Store in a cool, dark place. Preferably somewhere you visit frequently so you can easily remember to shake daily in order to ensure the top of herbs are not exposed to the air left in the jar and spoil. It is difficult to spoil a tincture with all dried plants, so don't concern yourself too much about this possibility if you are only using dried. Be more attentive when using fresh plants.

After a month of infusing, strain and bottle your bitters. Label and keep them in the kitchen or any place that reminds you to take a few drops before meals!



Neutral Milk

Neutral is producing carbon neutral grocery options, starting with milk!

by Gabi de León, Design Manager & Co-Manager

“For our dairy, [calculating our carbon footprint] begins with the emissions from the fertilizer used on the farm and includes everything... from the cows and the methane, the trucks to transport it, the energy at the copacker to process it, the packaging it goes into, the trucks again to distribute it, everything at retail, everything at your home, and even what happens when you dispose of that carton. Cradle to grave.”

Have you tried Neutral milk yet?

Neutral makes a great glass of milk, but the flavor isn't necessarily what sets it apart from the other milks in the Co-op's coolers. The thing that does set this milk apart is that it's 100% carbon neutral!

Agriculture accounts for a whopping 24% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, and dairy farms are a big contributor to that percentage. While many dairy producers have plans to become carbon neutral within the next 5, 10, or 30 years, Neutral founder Matt Plitch knew it was possible to produce dairy that is carbon neutral now. So he teamed up with organic dairy farmers in Oregon and Washington and Neutral was born.

But how is it 100% carbon neutral?

Neutral partners with 3 Degrees and Native Energy – both of which focus on renewable energy and carbon offset and reduction – to offset their own carbon footprint. In collaboration with these organizations, Neutral procures carbon offsets from dairy farm projects in the Pacific Northwest and across the country that produce renewable energy from cow waste. Though the organic farms in Neutral's supply chain are all at different stages in their sustainability journeys, Neutral ensures that all emissions they produce are accounted for and made carbon neutral by the dairy project offsets they acquire through their partnerships.

To calculate exactly how much emissions they need to offset, Matt says they have to understand and account for the full lifecycle of the carbon footprint of every food they produce:

“For our dairy, that begins with the emissions from the fertilizer used on the farm and includes everything... from the cows and the methane, the trucks to transport it, the energy at the copacker to process it, the packaging it goes into, the trucks again to distribute it, everything at retail, everything at your home, and even what happens when you dispose of that carton. Cradle to grave.”



Matt shares that this effort factors in great levels of detail, such as estimations around the leakage rates of the refrigerators in grocery stores' dairy aisles, and the emissions that come from driving to the grocery store. "We're able to achieve these deeply robust estimates through the work of our chief science advisor, Dr. Greg Thoma, from the University of Arkansas. Greg is one of the seminal experts in the field, having dedicated 12 years to studying more than 500 farms across America – and he tweaks and tunes his models and calculations to give us our estimates for each unique product."

Influencing a Carbon Neutral Future

Matt hopes that Neutral can influence farms and the greater dairy industry to implement sustainable practices that can neutralize and reduce their carbon footprints. "Within dairy, there are amazing, promising opportunities on the farm to achieve this from introducing cover crops or conservation tillage, to nutrient and manure management, to new energy efficiency measures. And so many farms are already doing great things. Our entire model is to build on that. By creating new value for people by selling carbon neutral foods, we can then pass that value upstream to the farms to introduce more and more practices and reduce that footprint."

Matt also hopes that Neutral can help shoppers feel like they have access to more options to reduce their personal carbon footprint. The big idea that inspired Matt to start Neutral was that so many people worldwide want to reduce their carbon footprint, but so many advertised solutions, like buying a Tesla, or installing solar panels on your roof, involve a big investment. But food is something everybody needs, and carbon neutral foods are something that many folks can have access to if they're available and affordable.

Neutral is only producing carbon neutral milk at the moment, but Matt says they plan to expand their line of organic, carbon neutral foods in the future. This fall they'll release their carbon neutral half-and-half. From there, they're working to start growing organic, carbon neutral produce, and eventually they'd like to produce food from all of the fundamental food groups, giving many folks the opportunity to adopt a carbon neutral lifestyle.

Neutral is local, organic, and is \$5.29 per half-gallon at the Co-op. Want to work with Neutral? They're hiring for a VP of Carbon Reduction and a VP of Grocery sales! Learn more and apply at <https://www.eatneutral.com/jobs>.

The Seven Cooperative Principles

#1 Voluntary, Open Membership

Open to all without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

#2 Democratic Member Control

One member, one vote.

#3 Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. The economic benefits of a cooperative operation are returned to the members, reinvested in the co-op, or used to provide member services.

#4 Autonomy & Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

#5 Education, Training, & Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

#6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, regional, national, and international structures.

#7 Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.



3029 SE 21st Avenue
Portland, OR 97202
(503) ORGANIC (674-2642)
info@peoples.coop
www.peoples.coop

PRESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
PORTLAND OR
PERMIT NO. 3142

Order your groceries online!

Curbside pickup is now available!

Learn more at
[peoples.coop/online-ordering](https://www.peoples.coop/online-ordering)