Legumes around the World
Mexico: Beans

Why are they grown?
Easy to grow, low cost, plentiful and versatile

What are the varieties grown?
The 3 most commonly grown beans in Mexico are:
- Black - 29%
- Pinto - 25%
- Light - 46%

What is the Geographical Growing Region?
- North Central Mexico 80%:
  Zacatecas, Durango, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosi & Guanajuato
- Northern Pacific Coast 21%:
  States of Sinaloa and Nayarit
- State of Chiapas 7%

Preferred Climate:
Semi-arid climate or tropical savannah climate

Growing Season:
Grown in two seasons: June-October and November-March

References:
1. www.leaf.tv/articles/mexican-staple-foods/
4. msu.edu/~bernsten/beanatlas/Country%20Pages--withGIS/Mexico/1.
   SubsectorOverview/mexico_text_subsector_overview.2.htm
6. traveltips.usatoday.com/traditional-foods-mexico-13609.html
7. ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/foods/
Traditional Recipes:
Frijoles charros’ (or ‘ranch-style beans’), cooked with onions, epazote and pork cracklings. Epazote is an herb used commonly in Mexican cuisine and traditional medicine.⁵

Frijoles y arroz (rice and beans) flavored with local spices and can be complemented with local fish or meat.⁶

Nutrient Content:
Each type of bean has slightly different nutritional content. For ½ cup beans, black beans cooked, boiled:

- **Protein**: 7.6g
- **Fiber**: 7.5 g
- **Saturated Fat**: 0.12 g
- **Folate**: 128 mcg

- **Calcium**: 23 mg
- **Iron**: 1.81 mg
- **Potassium**: 305 mg
- **Magnesium**: 60 mg

Fun Facts:
- Common beans began being grown agriculturally in Mexico about 7000 years ago.
- Beans were paid as tribute to the Aztecs when they conquered another tribe.⁸
- Pinto bean can be translated in Spanish to “painted bean” and is named for its coloring.

Nutrition Fact:
Amino acids are the “building blocks” of proteins. Foods may be considered either complete or incomplete protein sources based on whether or not they contain all the amino acids necessary for your body. When eaten separately, both beans and rice are considered incomplete proteins, meaning they do not contain all the amino acids that your body needs. However, when beans and rice are eaten together, as they commonly are in Mexico, the meal contains all the needed amino acids and can be considered a complete protein source.⁹

Pico de Gallo Recipe
The origins of salsa date back to the Aztec civilization. In the early 1500s, Spanish conquistadors noted that Aztecs would prepare a sauce with chili peppers, tomatoes, wild onions, and salt—the same ingredients found in modern salsas today. Below is a recipe for Pico de Gallo with black beans, a fresh salsa that can be made from the tomatoes and cilantro growing in your garden!

**Ingredients (yields 2 cups)**
- 4 ripe plum tomatoes
- 1 small white onion, diced
- 1 full bunch of cilantro
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- ½ cup black beans, drained and rinsed (if canned)
- salt to taste
- chips or tortillas for serving

**Materials**
- 2 cutting boards
- 2 kid safe knives
- ½ cup measuring cup
- Tablespoon
- Mixing bowl
- Small plates for serving

**Directions**
- Pre-wash tomatoes and cilantro. Have all students wash their hands.
- If old enough to use kid safe or adult knives, separate class into two tables each with a cutting board (otherwise have an adult prepare in front of class)
- The first table can chop the tomatoes with adult supervision
- The second table will peel the cilantro leaves off the stem and chop, with adult supervision, to produce ⅓ cup of leaves
- Select one student to gather tomatoes and cilantro into mixing bowl
- Select one student to add the chopped onions and black beans
- Select one student to add the lime juice and evenly mix the ingredients
- Teacher can add salt to taste, if needed
- Have students assist in dividing pico de gallo in small plates and serve with chips or tortillas.