

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 45 minutes
Total time: 55 minutes
Yield: 6-8 servings
Intensity Level: Easy / Beginner

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Why Are They Called “Crack” Green Beans?

Let’s be honest—the name says it all. These are not your grandma’s healthy, steamed green beans. These are the green beans that disappear at every potluck, BBQ, and holiday dinner before you can even get a spoonful. The reason? A magical, buttery, sweet-and-savory sauce made from brown sugar, soy sauce, garlic, and crispy bacon.

The “crack” moniker comes from the fact that they are incredibly addictive. The combination

of sweet, salty, and umami flavors transforms the humble green bean into a crave-worthy experience. Whether you use fresh, frozen, or canned beans, this recipe guarantees a clean plate and requests for the recipe card. It's a dump-and-bake side dish that requires almost no skill, just a willingness to embrace the butter.

Ingredients

For the Green Beans:

- 2 lbs (907g) fresh green beans, trimmed (or 3 cans of cut green beans, drained, or 2 bags of frozen cut green beans)
- 1 lb (454g) bacon, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced

For the “Crack” Sauce:

- 1/2 cup (1 stick / 113g) unsalted butter, melted
- 2/3 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce (or tamari for gluten-free)

- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for heat)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Instructions

Step 1: Preheat and Prep (10 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) . Lightly grease a 9×13-inch baking dish or a large cast-iron skillet with non-stick spray or a little butter.

If using fresh green beans, wash them and snap off the stem ends. If using frozen, no need to thaw—just break up any large clumps. If using canned, drain and rinse them well. Set aside.

Step 2: Crisp the Bacon (10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the chopped bacon until it is crispy and golden brown, about 8–10 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. Do not discard the bacon grease. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the grease in the pan.

Step 3: Sauté the Aromatics (5 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-Low)

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the diced onion to the reserved bacon grease. Sauté for 3–4 minutes until translucent and soft. Add the minced garlic and cook for another 30 seconds until fragrant. Be careful not to burn the garlic.

Step 4: Make the “Crack” Sauce (3 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

In a medium bowl, whisk together the melted butter, brown sugar, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, and red pepper flakes (if using). Whisk until the sugar is mostly dissolved. Taste and add a pinch of salt and pepper if needed (the soy sauce and bacon are already salty, so go easy).

Step 5: Assemble the Dish (2 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

In your prepared baking dish, combine the green beans, sautéed onions/garlic, and half of the crispy bacon. Pour the butter-brown sugar mixture over the top. Toss gently with tongs or a large spoon until everything is evenly coated.

Step 6: Bake to Perfection (35-40 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes. This allows the beans to steam and soften while absorbing the flavors.

After 20 minutes, remove the foil, stir the beans, and continue baking uncovered for another 15–20 minutes. This allows the sauce to thicken and caramelize slightly onto the beans. The beans should be tender but not mushy, and the sauce should be bubbly and glossy.

Step 7: Garnish and Rest (5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

Remove from the oven and sprinkle the remaining crispy bacon over the top. Let the dish rest for 5 minutes before serving. The sauce will thicken slightly as it cools.

Recipe Notes & Variations

- **Texture Tip:** If you prefer a crunchier green bean, reduce the covered baking time to 15 minutes and the uncovered time to 10 minutes.
- **Spice Level:** For a kick, add 1/2 teaspoon of cayenne pepper or a diced jalapeño to the sauce.
- **Gluten-Free:** Use tamari or coconut aminos instead of soy sauce, and ensure your Worcestershire sauce is gluten-free.
- **Vegetarian Option:** Omit the bacon. Use 2 tablespoons of olive oil to sauté the onions. Add 1 teaspoon of smoked sea salt to mimic the bacon's smokiness.
- **Make-Ahead:** Assemble the entire dish up to 24 hours in advance. Cover and refrigerate. Add 10 extra minutes to the covered baking time.

Nutrition Information (Estimated)

Serving Size: 1/8 of recipe

Calories: 385

Total Fat: 26g

Saturated Fat: 12g

Cholesterol: 55mg

Sodium: 720mg

Total Carbohydrates: 29g

Dietary Fiber: 3g

Total Sugars: 22g

Protein: 9g