

- Prep Time: 20 minutes (plus overnight soaking)
- Cook Time: 2 hours 30 minutes
- Total Time: 2 hours 50 minutes (excluding soaking time)
- Intensity Level: Moderate (straightforward steps requiring attention to simmering times)
- Yield: 8 generous servings

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Ingredients

For the Beans & Pork:

- Dry Navy Beans: 1 pound (rinsed, picked over, and soaked overnight)
- Bone-In Pork Shoulder (Boston Butt): 1.5 pounds, cut into large 2-inch chunks
- Thick-Cut Bacon: 8 ounces, diced
- Yellow Onion: 1 large, finely diced
- Garlic: 6 cloves, minced
- Chicken Broth or Stock: 4 to 6 cups (low sodium)
- Water: As needed to cover

For the Sauce:

- Tomato Paste: 3 tablespoons
- Apple Cider Vinegar: 2 tablespoons
- Dark Molasses: 1/3 cup

- Dark Brown Sugar: 1/4 cup (packed)
- Worcestershire Sauce: 2 tablespoons
- Yellow Mustard: 1 tablespoon
- Smoked Paprika: 1.5 teaspoons
- Ground Mustard (Dry): 1 teaspoon
- Kosher Salt: 1.5 teaspoons (adjust to taste)
- Black Pepper: 1 teaspoon (freshly cracked)

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Soak and Par-Cook the Beans

1. Overnight Soak: Place the rinsed navy beans in a large bowl and cover them with at least 3 inches of cold water. Allow them to soak at room temperature for 8 to 12 hours. Drain and rinse thoroughly. Alternatively, use the quick-soak method by boiling the beans for 2 minutes, removing from heat, covering, and letting them sit for 1 hour before draining.
2. Initial Simmer: Transfer the soaked beans to a large stockpot, cover with fresh water by 2 inches, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer gently for about 30 minutes until

the beans are just starting to soften. Drain and set aside.

Step 2: Render the Bacon and Sear the Pork

1. **Crisp the Bacon:** In a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven or large heavy pot over medium heat, add the diced bacon. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the fat renders out and the bacon becomes crispy (about 8 to 10 minutes). Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and set aside, leaving the rendered bacon fat in the pot.
2. **Brown the Pork:** Season the chunks of pork shoulder generously with salt and pepper. Working in batches if necessary, add the pork to the hot bacon fat and sear on all sides until a deep, golden-brown crust forms (about 6 to 8 minutes total). Remove the pork and set aside with the bacon.

Step 3: Build the Aromatics and Sauce Base

1. **Sauté Aromatics:** Reduce the heat to medium. Add the diced yellow onion to the remaining pork and bacon fat in the Dutch oven. Sauté for 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for an additional 1 minute until fragrant.
2. **Stir in Tomato Paste:** Add the tomato paste, smoked paprika, and dry mustard directly to the onion and garlic mixture. Stir constantly for 2 minutes to caramelize the tomato paste slightly, which builds a rich foundation of flavor.
3. **Incorporate Liquids and Sweeteners:** Pour in the apple cider vinegar, scraping up any browned bits stuck to the bottom of the pot. Whisk in the chicken broth, dark molasses, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, and yellow mustard until smooth.

Step 4: Combine and Slow Simmer

1. **Bring It Together:** Return the par-cooked navy beans, seared pork shoulder chunks, and crispy bacon back into the Dutch oven with the sauce mixture. Stir well to combine. If the liquid does not cover the beans and meat by about an inch, add a bit more chicken broth or water.
2. **Simmer to Perfection:** Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then immediately reduce the heat to low. Cover the pot with a tight-fitting lid and let it simmer for 1 hour and 30 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
3. **Tenderize the Pork:** Remove the lid during the last 30 minutes of cooking if you prefer a thicker sauce consistency. The pork shoulder should be melt-in-your-mouth tender, and the beans should be creamy and fully cooked through. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper if needed.

Chef's Pro Tips for Success

- **Low and Slow:** Traditional baked or simmered beans benefit greatly from patience. Do not rush the simmer; letting the pork break down slowly infuses every single bean with rich, savory goodness.
- **Make Ahead:** These pork and beans actually taste even better on the second day after the flavors have had time to meld together overnight in the refrigerator. Reheat gently on the stovetop before serving.

Nutritional Information

(Approximate values per serving, based on 8 servings)

- Calories: 420 kcal
- Total Fat: 16g
 - *Saturated Fat:* 5g
- Cholesterol: 55mg
- Sodium: 680mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 45g
 - *Dietary Fiber:** 11g
 - *Sugars:* 14g
- Protein: 26g