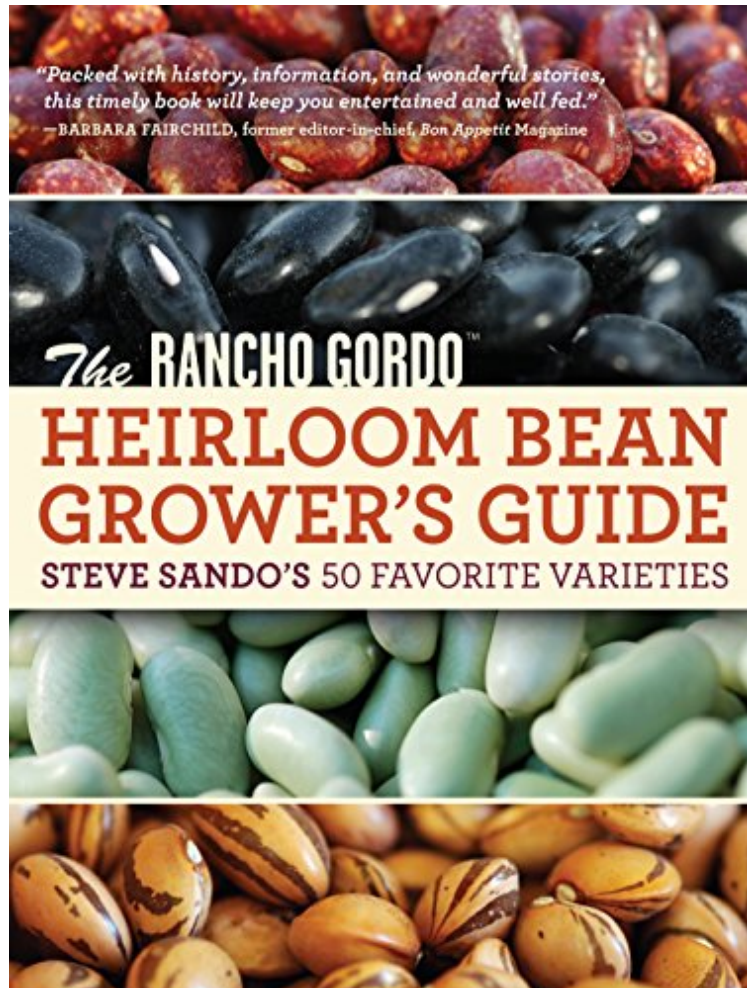


## The Rancho Gordo Heirloom Bean Grower's Guide: Steve Sando's 50 Favorite Varieties

*Steve Sando*

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**Steve Sando : The Rancho Gordo Heirloom Bean Grower's Guide: Steve Sando's 50 Favorite Varieties** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rancho Gordo Heirloom Bean Grower's Guide: Steve Sando's 50 Favorite Varieties:

40 of 40 people found the following review helpful. Not just for "Bean Growers"! By Christopher Cowan Simply put, there is absolutely nothing else out there quite like Steve Sando's "HEIRLOOM BEAN GROWER'S GUIDE - Steve Sando's 50 Favorite Varieties." Not in print; not online. At least not that I've seen. I have to admit that I didn't buy it. It was a gift from someone that knew I owned Sando's first book ("HEIRLOOM BEANS - Great Recipes for Dips and Spreads, Soups and Stews, Salads and Salsas") and loved it. I'll also admit that I probably would not have bought a book called "Bean Grower's Guide." I'm not a gardener and, from the title, thought that this new book had nothing for

me. I could not have been more mistaken. Have you ever bought a guidebook to a new destination, expecting nothing but dry prose, facts and statistics, names, places, dates, directions, only to discover to your delight that, instead, it's chockfull of clever writing, witty insights and charming stories? That has been my happy surprise with this book. It is a guidebook, of sorts, to a world that I didn't really know even existed. I was raised on a very few varieties of canned beans, none of which I liked much: red kidney beans, limas, pintos. Beyond that, well, as Sando himself says in the introduction "Who knew?" Last night, as an example, I prepared a big pot of Christmas Lima Beans. They were nothing like those dreaded little wrinkled green half-circles of pasty pap that my mother had to threaten me to eat (and that I noticed she never ate herself). She said they were "good for me." Good for me, they may have been. Good to me, they decidedly were not. Compare that to the Christmas Lima Beans I cooked last night. I simmered them in chicken broth, along with a hambone left over from a previous night's dinner, a couple of bay leaves, a scant pinch of nutmeg, and a sprinkle of crushed red pepper flakes. When the beans were tender, I sauted some onions and green bell peppers in butter in a skillet until the onions were clear, and then added them to the beanpot. If you knew me, you would know it's no fib when I tell you that even my 2-year-old granddaughter ate those beans like there was no tomorrow, picking them up with her fingers one by one and shoveling them into her mouth - such a far cry from my own childhood experience with Lima beans that I had to laugh at the thought. I never even would have tried anything labeled "Lima Beans" until I read in Sando's book this passage regarding Christmas Limas: "Their pot liquor is rich and deep, almost beefy. Of course you could use them in soups, salads, and as a vegetable side dish; and, unlike their cousins, the Baby Limas, I think they make a fine pot bean." We do, too. Since receiving this wonderful book, I've given it to several people. Yes, one is a gardener. In fact, she's in charge of the garden at her church. Several of the members grow vegetables to sell at a local farmer's market to help fund their charities. They also give baskets of the produce to some of the less-fortunate families in the parish. She is always looking for new and interesting varieties to plant. She later referred to Sando's book as a "Godsend." In her case, I guess she was speaking literally. I've also given copies to two friends that are attempting to maintain vegetarian diets in their households, despite the fact that they are feeding hungry teenagers. I don't know if they would consider the book to be a Godsend, but they have told me that it's full of excellent information that they have already put to good use. The book is subtitled, "Steve Sando's 50 Favorite Varieties," and he goes through each one, bean by bean, telling stories about how and where he discovered them (often while traveling through Mexico with hale and hearty friends, apparently made even haler and heartier with occasional shots of tequila), the characteristics of each variety that make it distinct, and suggestions for their preparation and serving. In the back of the book there are recipes. I've made several. Standouts are Baked Salmon with Dijon and Silky Snowcaps; Grilled Shrimp with Rancho Gordo White Beans, Caggiano Sausage and Argula; and Black Bean Soup with Chorizo. This is my first book review here on . I think I felt compelled to write it because I almost overlooked "Heirloom Bean Grower's Guide" since I'm not, and never will be, a "bean grower." I suspect there are many other folks out there that, like me, believe that unless they are bean growers, this book has nothing to offer them. They'd be so wrong. And that would be a shame. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Great reference and inspiration By LaraJFI love this book. I've bought beans from Rancho Gordo before, and have his other book. This one has helped inspire me to try new beans in different ways. It's wonderful for the stories as well as practical applications for how to apply the beans as a useful part of every meal. Eat More Beans! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Learned alot about different beans and it inspired us to ... By Bobbisusie Learned alot about different beans and it inspired us to try some new varieties. It also helped us decided on varieties to plant in our garden. Lots of information.

Steve Sando founded Rancho Gordo with the simple idea that saving our New World foods is a critical pursuit, and his passion for heirloom beans has made his business a huge success. Sandos beans are sought after by famous chefs like Thomas Keller (Vallarta is his favorite), and hes frequently profiled in publications such as Bon Appetit, Saveur, and the New York Times. In The Rancho Gordo Heirloom Bean Grower's Guide, Sando invites the gardener and home cook to share his passion, profiling the fifty best beans to grow, cook, and save. From the silky flavor of Good Mother Stallard to the buttery Runner Cannellinis, the most delicious varieties are presented in these pages along with growing tips, flavor notes, stories of their heritage, and beautiful photographs that showcase the unique beauty of each bean. In reintroducing the best of the New World heirloom beans, Sando has created a sensation, and food-lovers everywhere will relish transforming this humble staple into a celebrated delicacy.

About the Author In a few short years, Steve Sando has taken the lowly bean from a neglected legume to superstar-status ingredient. Sandos company, Rancho Gordo, grows, imports, and promotes heirloom and heritage varieties while working directly with consumers and chefs like Thomas Keller, Deborah Madison, Paula Wolfert, and David Kinch. Sandos seed saving, bean production, and marketing efforts provide professional and home chefs with heirloom beans that would otherwise have been lost to history. The beans, along with corn, chiles, and tomatoes, have become key ingredients in the new American food revolution centered in Sandos native San Francisco Bay Area. In fact, Sando and Rancho Gordo were named number two on Saveur Magazines The Saveur 100 list for 2008. Bon Appetit

magazine declared Sando one of the Hot 10 in the food world of 2009. Food + Wine magazine placed Steve at the forefront of the current seed-saving movement. Steve's previous book, with Vanessa Barrington, was *Heirloom Beans* (Chronicle, 2008). Steve Sando came to agriculture not from the 4H club but from the grocery store. As a frustrated home cook, he decided to grow the ingredients he wanted in his kitchen. At the forefront of neglected ingredients were beans. Although they are an indigenous product of the Americas, the only beans available commercially to most home cooks were pintos, navies, and kidneys. Discovering heirloom beans to be as rich and varied as heirloom tomatoes, Sando almost singlehandedly created the market for these unique and worthwhile legumes. He now grows more than 25 varieties in California and works with small indigenous farmers in Mexico to import their heirloom beans for the U.S. market. He lives in Napa and travels frequently throughout the Americas collecting beans, friends, and adventures.