

full of beans (plus bonus recipes)!

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Beans are an excellent source of fiber, protein, and minerals, are fat-free, with a low glycemic load—important to those watching their carbohydrate intake.

south point veggie chili

I named this dish after our wonderful location on Madawaska Lake. I have been making it for about twenty-five years. It is meatless, but I have served it to many guests who, after finishing the meal, swore it had meat in it! Meatless means easy on the budget, too. You'll find it is deeply satisfying, and the secret lies in the spices and how they are carefully toasted to bring out their flavor.

Main Ingredients

- 3 Tbs light olive oil (divided)
- 3 cloves garlic (or use garlic powder to taste)
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 sweet peppers (I use one red and one green), diced
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 8 large button mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 2 15-oz cans diced tomatoes
- 3 15-oz cans red kidney beans, drained and rinsed

Seasoning Ingredients

- 3 Tbs chili powder
- 1 Tbs ground cumin
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 2 Tbs dark brown sugar (if your diet allows, as this one of the secrets to the great taste)
- 2 Tbs balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper (or more to taste; I use about a ½ tsp)

Directions

Place a 5-quart pot or dutch oven over medium heat. Place two tablespoons of oil and heat about a minute. Add peppers and onions and stirring often, cook till they begin to soften. Add garlic and mushrooms and stir well till coated.

Push vegetables back to form a small well and reduce heat to low. Place remaining oil in the well and add chili powder, cumin, and oregano. Stir spices in the well with a wooden spoon for a minute or so, taking care not to burn, until the mixture is aromatic. Stir in the vegetables to coat, and continue to cook for another minute or so till bubbling.

Deglaze pan by adding tomatoes and their juice, scraping up brown bits. Turn the heat up again. Add brown sugar, vinegar, salt, cayenne, carrots, and beans. Mix well, cover, and simmer, stirring often, for about a half hour or until carrots are soft.

Stir in corn. Simmer another half-hour. If too watery, set the lid off a bit to allow some to cook away, or thicken with a tablespoon of cornstarch dissolved in a tablespoon of water. If too thick, add water or tomato juice. Simmer for several minutes afterward to insure the starch is thoroughly cooked and juices are clear. Make final adjustments for heat and salt. Serve with shredded Jack cheese, sour cream, pickled jalapenos, and hot flour tortillas.

white turkey or chicken chili

This stew is a welcome change from ordinary chili. Again, toasting the spices provides a rich “umami,” that indescribable, savory deliciousness missing from many dishes. This calls for boneless chicken or turkey breasts, but you can also use ground chicken or turkey if you prefer.

Main Ingredients

- 3 Tbs olive oil (divided)
- 2 large yellow onions, diced

- 1½ lbs of boneless, skinless turkey, chicken breast, or thighs, cut in 1-inch chunks
- ½ bag frozen shoe peg corn
- 2 15-oz cans white beans (cannellini) drained and rinsed
- 3 cups chicken broth
- ½ small box of button mushrooms, sliced
- 2 Tbs lime juice
- 1 small can green chilis
- 3 garlic cloves, minced (or garlic powder)
- 2 Tbs cornstarch in 2 Tbs water
- Seasoning Ingredients
- ¼ cup chili powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp dried oregano

Directions

Pat poultry very dry with paper towels. Salt liberally and brown in 2 Tbs oil. Remove from pan, add onions, garlic, and mushrooms, and follow the directions for South Point Chili to toast spices, taking care not to burn. Deglaze with broth and lime juice, add beans, browned meat, chilis, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer till meat is cooked through. Stir in cornstarch mixture. Add corn and simmer another fifteen minutes. Pass the hot sauce, sour cream, shredded cheese, jalapenos, and warm flour tortillas.

bonus recipes

These recipes are not included on my newspaper column because of space constraints. Checking my blog every week will reward you with several more meal ideas and handy tips.

three-bean salad

This classic salad is so easy to make, you'll never go back to buying that stuff in a jar. This is a tasty dish that even kids will eat, and you can keep a container of three-bean in your 'fridge year round. This is a nice accompaniment to any meal and is an easy fix for potluck

suppers—just double or triple the amounts. When fresh beans are available, you can use them, They'll have to be cooked tender-crisp before you can use them in this recipe.

- 1 can cut green string beans (Blue Lake variety is best)
- 1 can cut wax beans
- 1 16-oz dark or light red kidney beans
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 2/3 cup white vinegar
- 2/3 cup sugar (or substitute of your choice)
- 1/3 cup light olive or grapeseed oil (Reduce or eliminate if you are restricting fats)
- 1 tsp salt
- Pepper to taste

Drain and rinse all canned vegetables and place in a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl place vinegar, sugar, and salt, and stir till sugar is dissolved. Add oil and whisk till emulsified. Pour over vegetables, add onion, pepper, and mix thoroughly. Place in a covered container and refrigerate 18-24 hours, mixing now and then to distribute dressing. Serve cold. Delish!

tuna & white bean salad

This is a fun lunch, but very nutritious. I prefer chunk light tuna because it has a more defined taste, but you can use whatever you like. Water-packed is best for this recipe. Serves four.

Ingredients

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ tsp salt (if you use coarse salt, increase to ½ tsp)
- 1 Tbs lemon juice
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- ½ sweet red pepper
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- 1 can cannellini (white kidney) beans
- 1 pouch or one 5-oz can chunk light tuna (or albacore—your choice), drained and flaked

- Basil (fresh is best, but dried is fine) You can also substitute fresh parsley.
- Lemon zest (optional but it makes a huge difference in the flavor)

Directions

In a small bowl, mash garlic with salt using the back of a spoon. Mix in lemon juice and pepper to taste. Slowly whisk in olive oil. Add lemon zest and set aside.

In a medium size bowl, toss red pepper, onion, and beans together. Add tuna and mix, tossing lightly. Mix in garlic and oil dressing and basil.

Serve at room temperature in lettuce cups or over garden greens with some crisp toasted bread or crackers.

black beans & rice

This delicious dish requires a special seasoning made by Goya. It's available in almost any grocery store and adds an authentic Mexican touch.

- 1 can undrained black beans (Goya brand is best quality)
- 1 Tbs extra virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ¼ tsp cumin
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 packet Goya Saizon Without Annetto
- 1 Tbs white vinegar
- ½ brown sugar
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¼ cup water
- 2 cups cooked white rice
- ½ cup each diced green bell pepper and diced onion

Prepare rice and keep steaming hot. While rice is cooking, sauté peppers and onions till soft. Stir in remaining ingredients, heat till blubbing, and pour over rice. Serve immediately.