

Cuban Black Bean Soup



Ingredients

- 5 cans black beans, rinsed and drained (4 to start, 1 for later)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1-2 jalapeño peppers, finely chopped (adjust for spice level)
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
- 1 can (14.5 oz) fire roasted diced tomatoes (optional for more flavor)
- 4 cups vegetable broth or water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh cilantro, chopped (for garnish)
- Lime wedges (for serving)

Instructions

1. Sauté the Vegetables:

- In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion, bell pepper, jalapeño, celery, and garlic. Sauté for 5-7 minutes until vegetables are softened and fragrant.

2. Add Spices:

- Stir in cumin, smoked paprika, oregano, chili powder, and crushed red pepper flakes. Cook for another 1-2 minutes to release the flavors of the spices.

3. Add Beans and Broth:

- Add the canned black beans and vegetable broth (or water) to the pot. If you'd like a tomato base, add the can of diced tomatoes with their juice.

4. Simmer:

- Add the bay leaf and bring the soup to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat and let it simmer uncovered for 20-25 minutes, allowing the flavors to meld together.

5. Adjust the Seasoning:

- Stir in the red wine vinegar, and season the soup with salt and pepper to taste. Adjust the heat level by adding more crushed red pepper flakes if desired.

6. Blend

- Blend the 5th can of black beans with juice and a little vegetable broth until creamy then add to soup to thicken.

7. Serve:

- Ladle the spicy black bean soup into bowls, garnish with fresh cilantro, and serve with lime wedges for a burst of citrus.

Serving Suggestions: Serve alongside white rice or warm crusty bread. Top with avocado slices, vegan sour cream, or fresh jalapeño slices for added layers of flavor.