

Three Easy Beanies

By Daniel Berman (fussylittleblog.com) for All Over Albany

Chana Masala

To save you time, and energy, I've worked out the proportions to use an entire box of the spice blend, with two pounds of dried chickpeas. It makes an incredible amount of food, but all of these bean dishes freeze and reheat well. So put some away, and pull it out for a quick and delicious weeknight dinner.

Ingredients

2 lbs of dried chickpeas
2 large onions, diced
enough canola oil to saute the onions
1.5 Tb of salt
28 oz of diced canned tomatoes
1 box of MDH chana masala spice mix
2 teaspoons of baking soda

You will need two pretty big stockpots.

1. Take 2 lbs of dried chickpeas, pick them over, rinse them, cover with three inches of water, and soak overnight.
2. Drain and re-cover with water. Bring water to a boil then reduce to a simmer for about an hour until beans are al dente.
3. While beans are cooking, sauté in the second pot two large diced onions in plenty of canola oil and 1.5T of salt. Mrs. Fussy hates onions, so I turn down the heat and sweat them for as long as possible.
4. Drain the beans, and have them ready.
5. Strain a 28 oz. can of diced tomatoes and have them ready.
6. Dump the spice mix into the onions and stir over medium-high heat for a minute.
7. Dump the diced tomatoes into the spice mix and stir for another minute.
8. Dump in the beans, and stir to distribute the spice-onion mixture throughout.
9. Cover with cold water by about an inch, add 2 rounded teaspoons of baking soda (oddly), bring to boil and reduce to simmer.
10. Simmer uncovered for about 40 minutes until water is reduced to a thick gravy and the beans are tender (adding more water if needed).

Once you make this at home, and realize how easily you can produce a massive amount of delicious food for a measly \$6, it may be difficult to order one portion of this dish at an Indian restaurant.

Cuban Black Beans

This is an inexpensive dish that makes a massive amount of delicious food that can easily be a meal unto itself, with rice and some fried plantains on the side.

Ingredients

2 lbs dried black beans, picked over
16 cups of water (1 gallon)
4 green peppers, seeded and chopped
2 large onions, chopped
10 garlic cloves, chopped
1 cup + 4 Tb olive oil
4 Tb salt
1 Tb pepper
2 bay leaves
2 Tb sugar
2 Tb white vinegar
4 Tb dry white "cooking wine"

[Note: This is the only recipe in which I use "cooking wine" and I look for a Spanish brand such as Goya. It is important to underscore that this "cooking wine" is different than a wine you would use for cooking. The "cooking wine" referenced here is actually salted, yes salted, and sold in Latin markets. The beans actually need the additional salt from the cooking wine. Deviate from these instructions at your peril.]

Day 1

1. Get a big big pot.
2. Take 2 lbs of dried black beans, picked over just in case a small pebble wandered in.
3. Measure 16 cups of water and pour into the pot with the beans.
4. Take 2 green peppers, remove their seeds (personally I like to peel them too), chop and add to the water.
5. Cover the pot and let it sit overnight.

Day 2

1. Grab a large sauté pan.
2. DO NOT DRAIN THE BEANS.
3. Take the pot of beans and boil for about 45 minutes or until they are soft.
4. Chop 2 large onions, 10 garlic cloves and 2 additional green peppers.
5. Put 1 cup of olive oil into sauté pan.
6. Sauté the vegetables with 2T of salt in the oil over medium/high heat until tender.
7. Remove one cup of beans from the pot and mash them.
8. Add the mashed beans to the vegetables and sauté further, until melded.
9. Put the vegetable and bean mixture back in the bean pot.
10. Add additional 2t of salt, 1t pepper, ½t oregano, 2 bay leaves, 2T sugar to pot.
11. Bring to a lively simmer, and simmer for an hour.
12. Add 2T plain white vinegar and 4T dry white "cooking wine".
13. Simmer on low until reduced to your desired thickness.
14. Finish the beans by mixing in an additional 4T of olive oil. It gives the beans a glossy finish and silky texture.

Black-eyed peas

This recipe is adapted from one at A Southern Grace (asoutherngrace.blogspot.com). Grace writes a food blog that is generally dedicated to the sweet and rich, so when she breaks form for something classic and savory, I perk up and take notice.

Ingredients

2 cups dried black-eyed peas
5 cups water or broth
1 ham hock
2 teaspoons cumin
2 teaspoons dry mustard
salt and pepper, to taste
2 tb dried parsley
a vinegar-based hot sauce, to taste

1. Cover the black-eyed peas with water in a large pot. Bring to a boil. After 3 minutes, remove from heat. Cover and let sit for 1 hour.
2. Drain the water from the peas.
3. Add the water/broth, ham hock, cumin, mustard.
4. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook -- with the lid on -- for 1 hour. The beans should be tender.
5. Toss in the parsley, stir.
6. Finish with the hot sauce to taste.

Brown rice

And just because beans go great with rice, before I go, I'll share this fantastic technique for making perfect brown rice. In the summer I make it in the oven, but when the air in the house is dry, nothing beats doing them on the stovetop like this.

Ingredients

Brown rice
gigantic pot of unsalted water

1. Rinse the rice
2. Boil in the water for 30 minutes, just like you'd cook pasta
3. Strain the rice
4. Let the rice steam in pot, off heat, for 10 minutes
5. Done.

You can read the original post at <http://alloveralbany.com/archive/2011/11/17/cooking-out-the-cold>
Or... scan this QR code with your smartphone:

