

Cuban Black Beans

Ingredients

1 tbsp good quality olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and cut into 1 cm squares
1 red/yellow bell pepper, cored and cut into 1 cm squares
4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced or passed through a garlic press
2 tbsp tomato paste

1 lb. dry black beans (organic if possible), soaked overnight and rinsed
100 grams smoked ham (see notes)
1 32-oz carton of organic vegetable/chicken/beef broth
2 bay leaves
1 dry chipotle chili
½ tsp chipotle powder
2 tsp cumin
1 tsp raw sugar
1 tsp salt

Preparation

1. In a large pan, heat a small quantity of olive oil. When the oil is hot, toss in the onion. Cook onion, stirring regularly, until it starts to take on a golden color (about 5 minutes). Add pepper and cook an additional 3-4 minutes, stirring regularly.
2. Toss in the garlic and cook another 45 seconds, stirring constantly to keep the garlic from sticking to the pan. Add tomato paste and stir until everything is well mixed. Turn off heat and set aside.
3. Place beans and all other ingredients into a pressure cooker and cook for 30-40 minutes on the proper setting.
4. When ready, taste, adjust seasoning and garnish with cilantro.

Notes

Use a high-quality stainless steel pan for this recipe.

Soak beans overnight (or at least for 3 hours) in cold water. Then drain the water and rinse well.

The smoked ham adds extra depth of flavor. I use a single chunk of ham and remove it when the beans are done cooking. You can also shred the ham after it's cooked and mix in with the beans. For a vegan version, skip the ham and use a vegetable broth.