

Three-Bean Vegetarian Chili

(from the Williams-Sonoma *Beans & Rice* Cookbook)

This chili is versatile. Try serving it warm as an appetizer dip with tortilla chips or as a filling for burritos. Virtually any dried beans can be substituted for the beans given here. Monterey jack cheese, sour cream, chopped fresh cilantro (fresh coriander) would make good garnishes.

¾ cup (5 oz/155g) dried pinto beans
¾ cup (5 oz/155g) dried red kidney beans
¾ cup (5 oz/155g) dried black beans
1/3 cup (3 fl oz/80ml) olive oil
3 yellow onions, chopped
2 or 3 fresh serrano or jalapeno peppers, seeded and minced
6 large cloves garlic, minced
6 tablespoons (1 oz/30 g) chili powder
2 ½ tablespoons ground cumin
¾ teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 cans (28 oz/875 g each) crushed plum tomatoes
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Pick over and discard any damaged beans or stones. Rinse beans. Place in a bowl, add plenty of water to cover and soak for about 3 hours. Drain beans and set aside.

In a large, heavy saucepan over low heat, warm the olive oil. Add onions and chili peppers and sauté, stirring, until the onions are soft, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic, chili powder, cumin, cayenne and oregano and sauté, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the beans, tomatoes and water to cover by 3 inches. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered, until the beans are very tender and begin to fall apart, 2 ½ to 3 hours. Add water if the beans begin to dry out but are not yet cooked. The chili will be very thick.

Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Ladle into individual bowls and serve.

Amanda's notes: Despite the peppers and chili powder, this is not a spicy hot chili. The recipe says it serves 6. That would be 6 very large servings. Any crushed tomatoes will work; you needn't search high and low for crushed plum tomatoes. I added a pound of sautéed, lean ground beef about 10 minutes before the end of the cooking time and my yield was about 9 servings of about 2 cups each. For Disciples Kitchen, I would estimate 8 servings without meat and 10 servings with meat.