

CASHEW CHILI

EILEEN GREENHAM

Exciting, a little hot, with lots of surprises-especially raisins and cashews. Serve with grated colby or Monterey jack cheese, and with steamy warm cornbread or cooked brown rice.

- 2-3 c cooked kidney or pinto beans (1 c dry)
- 4 medium onions, chopped
- 2 green peppers, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 3 or more cloves garlic, mashed
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 Tbsp chili or 1/2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 quart home-canned tomatoes
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 to 1 c cashews
- 1 handful raisins or 1 tbsp molasses
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 c red wine vinegar or cider vinegar

Follow the detailed soup instructions. Stir fry the celery in with the onions and pepper. Add the vinegar a little at a time, tasting between additions, when the chili is almost ready to serve.

Variations:

- You can make chili as hot as you like by adding more chili or chili powder. Mild chili is a more subtle pleasure.
- Add 3-4 carrots or parsnips, diced, for sweet tastes and a different texture.
- Add snap beans for a lighter, greener chili.
- A dash or 2 of sherry is good in chili; and believe it or not, beer is the most delicious liquid in which to cook beans or to thin chili.

Yield: Serves 6-8.

SOUP - DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS

Soup is a puttering affair. You assemble the ingredients gradually, cook them over a long period, sample, add, and cook some more. The method is important. This recipe tells you how to make the soup base, and how to cook vegetables, grains, and beans in it. Some suggested vegetables and the times at which you add them to the soup are noted in the instructions as you go along. Don't hold yourself back when adding extra ingredients. This recipe makes one warming, steaming potful of soup, enough for six to eight people.

- 1/2 - 1 c dried beans (1 1/2 - 3 c cooked beans)
- 1/2 c uncooked grain (1 c cooked grain)

4 medium onions, chopped
 2 green peppers, chopped
 3 or more cloves garlic, mashed
 1 tsp dried basil
 1 tsp dried parsley
 1 quart home-canned tomatoes, or 608 fist-sized fresh tomatoes
 Freshly ground black pepper
 1 tsp sea salt, plus more to taste
 Red wine
 Vegetables, all types and plenty of them

1. On the night before you want soup, if you don't have grains or beans already cooked up, start soaking them. Then cook them on the day you're going to make soup.
2. On the day you want soup-well before you're planning on eating it-get out a big cast iron pot with a lid, or your biggest heavy pot with a cover. (Cooking soup in cast iron is a good idea for more than esthetics: some of the iron from the pot dissolves in the soup, and the iron is available to your body.) Pour a little unrefined oil into the pot, and stir-fry the onions, green pepper, and garlic. Add the basil, parsley, and any other dried herbs you'd like to use. Also fry the spices now. I like using a pinch of cinnamon or ground allspice in my soups. Fry the herbs and spices in with the onions, stirring all the time.
3. Stir in 1 qt oftomatoes, juice and all, breaking up the tomatoes with a big wooden spoon. If you're using fresh tomatoes, chop up about 6-8 medium sized ones, and cook them in the onion mixture over low heat so they juice.
4. Grind in lots of pepper. Add a bay leaf if you're using one. Also stir in any nuts you're using and maybe a fistfuol of raisins to take the bite out of the tomatoes. (A grated carrot will accomplish the same mellowing trick.) Add 1 tsp sea salt, or 2 tsp if you're using fresh tomatoes.
5. Add a nice pour of hearty red wine. Wine gives soup extra fragrance as it cooks, and a richer taste.
6. Cover the pot and begin to simmer the soup. Stir it every now and then, and if it starts getting too thick, stir in a little water, vegetable water, or the water you've cooked the grains and beans in.
7. Start adding vegetables. In general, when cutting vegetables, try to keep all vegetable pieces about the same size. If you're going to eat soup from big bowls, it's fine to leave the vegetables in big pieces. But if you're going to eat from smaller bowls, it's a lott nicer to have smaller vegetable chunks.
 You add long-cooking vegetables first-carrots, beets, turnips, potatoes, parsnips, sweet potatoes. simmer the soup about 30 minutes, until the begetables are partially cooked and still nicely firm.
8. Add all the medium-cooking vegetables you're using-corn, green and yellow beans, broccoli, cauliflower, okra. Cook about 20 minutes.

9. Add your cooked grains and beans from step 1, along with any extra water you've cooked them in. The water has a lot of flavor, and also contains some of the water-soluble vitamins of the grains and beans. continue cooking until the grains and beans are heated through.
10. Add the short-cooking vegetables-cabbage, kale, peas, snow peas, summer squash. Dice or shred cabbage, but leave it in nice-sized lumps. You want to be able to identify it. Cook a few more minutes, so the vegetables are tender, but still crisp.
11. Sample soup. Tasting is essential. You will almost always want to reseason it - a pinch more salt, a few grinds more of black pepper, a dash more wine, or a squirt of fresh lemon juice or red wine vinegar for lightness. If the soup is too thick, add more vegetable water.
12. A few minutes before eating the soup, break the delicate greens onto the top of the simmering soup-spinach, Swiss chard, beet greens, fresh basil, Chinese cabbage. Be sure to break the greens into small pieces, or they will cook up into long strands which are difficult to swallow. Put the lid back on the pot and continue simmering. The greens on top will steam in the vapors from the soup and will keep their color. Mix them into the soup when they're cooked.
13. Right before you want to eat, snip fresh basil, parsley, scallions, or chives into the soup for their bright color and freshness.
14. And now you have a potful of soup. Soup by it self is a feast. Or top it with grated Cheddar cheese, a dollop of yoghurt, or ricotta cheese. Sprinkle it with more finely minced fresh herbs. Or ladle soup over a mound of cottage cheese in a bowl. The warm soup steeps down through the cheese curds. If you're making lunch for someone who's working, pack hot soup in a thermos. When your friend opens the soup, it's almost as if you were there too.

(Whew!!) This recipe should be read in Julia Child's voice!

