

Best Black Bean Soup

By Julia Moskin | **YIELD** 10 servings | **TIME** About 2 hours

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SOUP:

1 small (7-ounce) can chipotle chiles in adobo (see note)

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 carrots, peeled and chopped

2 onions, peeled and chopped

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 cup red wine

2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and chopped

1 pound dry black beans

2 quarts mild vegetable or chicken stock

1 tablespoon oregano, preferably Mexican

2 bay leaves

1 tablespoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Red wine vinegar, to taste

FOR THE PICKLED ONIONS AND OTHER GARNISHES (OPTIONAL):

1 small red onion, peeled and thinly sliced

Freshly squeezed juice of 2 limes

Salt

Sour cream or Mexican crema

PREPARATION

Step 1

Empty the can of chiles into a blender or food processor. Purée until smooth, scrape into a container, and set aside. Put on a teakettle of water to boil, and keep hot.

Step 2

In a large, heavy pot, heat olive oil over medium heat until shimmering. Add carrots, onions and garlic and cook, stirring, until softened but not browned, 5 to 8 minutes.

Step 3

Pour in wine and let simmer until pan is almost dry and vegetables are coated. Add jalapeños and cook, stirring, just until softened, 2 minutes. Push the vegetables out to the edges of the pot and dollop 2 teaspoons of chipotle purée in the center. Let fry for a minute and then stir together with the vegetables.

Step 4

Add beans, stock, oregano and bay leaves. Stir, bring to a boil, and let boil 10 to 15 minutes. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally and adding hot water as needed to keep the soup liquid and runny, not sludgy. Continue cooking until beans are just softened and fragrant, 1 to 2 hours. Add salt and pepper and keep cooking until beans are soft.

Step 5

Meanwhile, make the pickled onions, if using: In a bowl, combine sliced onions, lime juice and a sprinkling of salt. Let soften at room temperature until crunchy and tart, about 30 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water. Squeeze dry in paper towels and refrigerate until ready to serve. If desired, chop coarsely before serving.

Step 6

Adjust the texture of the soup: The goal is to combine whole beans,

Whole cilantro leaves

soft chunks and a velvety broth. Some beans release enough starch while cooking to produce a thick broth without puréeing. If soup seems thin, use an immersion blender or blender to purée a small amount of the beans until smooth, then stir back in. Continue until desired texture is reached, keeping in mind that the soup will continue to thicken as it sits.

Step 7

Heat the soup through, taste and adjust the seasonings with salt, pepper, drops of red wine vinegar and dabs of chipotle purée.

Step 8

Serve in deep bowls, garnishing each serving with a dollop of sour cream, a scattering of pickled onions and a flurry of cilantro leaves if you like.

Tip

If chipotle chiles are unavailable, use 1 tablespoon each ground cumin and ground coriander. Add to vegetables at the same point in the recipe, in Step 3.

PRIVATE NOTES

Leave a Private Note on this recipe and see it here.