



Refried Beans

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

- 1 pound of dried pinto beans (approx. 2 cups)
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1/2 onion, peeled
- A good pinch of Epazote
- 1/2 onion finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 4 slices of bacon
- 1 tsp light chili powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

This is a pretty basic recipe, but it can be adjusted at about every step. You can add peppers or change out the fat or change the beans. Mixing in cheese at the end is also pretty tasty. You can pretty much throw in just about anything you have laying around.

1. Put beans in 1/2 gallon container, fill with water, let soak overnight (12-24 hrs) in refrigerator. In a pinch you can quick soak by bringing beans to a boil and then turning off the heat and letting them sit for an hour, but the overnight soak is better. Drain soaked beans and then place back in the pot.
2. Cover beans with 2 inches of fresh water. Add the uncut half of the onion, the epazote and the smoked ham hock. Bring beans to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for an hour, stirring occasionally. The time it will take to cook the beans will depend on the freshness of the beans and the hardness of your water. If they're not completely cooked after an hour, let them simmer a while longer until they're done.

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3. Remove the ham hock then drain the beans, retaining 1 cup of the bean broth.
 4. Chop the slices of bacon and fry them in a skillet on medium until crispy and all the fat is rendered. Remove cooked pieces. The bacon can be saved for later or eaten right away, maybe use it on a salad.
 5. Fry the diced onion in the bacon grease for a couple of minutes, and then add the minced garlic and cook for another minute. If you feel you need more fat, you can add a little olive oil.
 6. While the onion and garlic are sautéing, take 2 cups of the cooked beans and place in a blender. Add some of the bean broth and blend until you achieve a thick pasty soup consistency. If you don't use all the retained broth, that's ok.
 7. When the onion and garlic is done, add the drained cooked beans into the skillet. Keep stirring the mashed beans in the bacon fat until the texture is a chunky paste. Add more bean broth if needed to get your desired texture. Mix in the chili powder salt and pepper and serve with rice.

Makes 4-6 servings.

Notes: If you don't want to cook a pot of beans, two 16 oz. cans of cooked pintos can be used instead, but soaked beans taste better in my opinion. If you want to slow-cook the beans, soak the beans for 8-10 hours in the refrigerator, then slow-cook them on low for 6-8 hours.