

Everyday Healthy! Everyday Delicious!

From the Kitchen of Janice Feuer Haugen

Quick Black Bean, Tomato & Corn Soup

Whether you use canned beans or your home-cooked beans, this really is a quick soup to prepare. It is gluten-free and vegan (depending on the yoghurt). One change I would make when I have the time to cook the beans would be to add the tomatoes to the beans after they have baked for one hour. Use organic products if you can, especially the diced tomatoes and corn.

Yield: 14+ cups

3 25-ounce cans black beans, undrained OR 1 pound of dried black beans cooked according to the recipe below (or according to your favorite recipe)

1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes

1½ cups canned or frozen corn

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion, diced

4 medium cloves garlic, pushed through a garlic press

1 Serrano or jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely minced OR a large pinch red pepper flakes or more to taste

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon salt

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Broth

If you cook your own beans, use all of the cooking broth and enough additional water as necessary to equal 4½ cups

If you use canned beans, use all of the liquid from the cans PLUS 3 cups of vegetable stock (or water and 1 tablespoon vegetable bouillon paste (i.e., [Better Than Bouillon Organic Vegetable Base](#))

Garnishes

Fresh cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped

Fresh lime juice

Sour cream or plain yoghurt

Thinly sliced green onions, white and green parts

Cook the black beans according to the above recipe or open the cans of black beans.

Put the olive oil into a soup pot over medium-high heat. When it's hot add the diced onion. Cover the pot and cook for about 10 minutes till the onion is translucent and begins to color. Stir in the garlic and minced pepper, cumin, thyme and salt. Cook uncovered for another minute. Add the diced tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes.

Stir in the black beans and their cooking broth; OR the canned black beans, their liquid and the bouillon paste and water OR the vegetable stock. Raise the heat to high and bring the soup to a boil. Lower the heat so the soup simmers, and cook partially covered for 10 minutes. Stir in the

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corn. Continue to cook for another 5 minutes.

For a richer texture, use a blender to puree two cups of the soup, and then stir the puree back into the soup. Adjust the salt and pepper to taste.

Serve garnished with as many or as few of the garnishes as you have on hand. Note: for a quick and tasty topping, squeeze fresh lime juice into the yoghurt or sour cream along with some ground cumin and salt and pepper to taste.

How to Cook Beans the Cook's Illustrated Way

Cook's Illustrated used cannellini beans and I used black beans, so perhaps this method works with all beans—do let me know your results if you try their method with other kinds of beans.

Makes about 5½ cups of beans

1 pound (2 cups) dry black beans sorted through to remove stones and broken beans
1 gallon water
3 tablespoons salt
2 bay leaves
1 large clove garlic, peeled

Dissolve the salt in the water. Add the sorted and rinsed beans and presoak them at room temperature from 8-24 hours. Drain and rinse the beans very well to remove any salt water from their surface. Place the beans in an oven proof pot with a lid. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees.

Here's my adaptation on the recipe: I add 6 cups of water, two bay leaves and 1 large clove of peeled, smashed garlic to the beans. (Discard the bay and garlic once the beans are cooked.)

Bring the water just to a boil and then cover the pot and place it in the preheated oven. Bake the beans for 1½ hours. Remove the pot from the oven and check that the beans are soft; if not, cook in 15 minute increments until they are. Mine were perfect—very creamy and tender. I ended up with 5½ cups of black beans and 4½ cups of broth.

