



3-Bean Vegetarian Chili with Roasted Peppers and Butternut Squash

Ingredients:

Extra virgin olive oil

2 bell peppers (I used red, but yellow or orange would also work here)

1 medium sized red onion, coarsely chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 (15 oz) can of kidney beans, drained/rinsed

1 (15 oz) can of cannellini beans, drained/rinsed

1 (15 oz) can of black beans, drained/rinsed

1 (15 oz) can of no-salt chopped tomatoes, keep the juice

Approximately 20 oz peeled, cubed (uncooked) butternut squash*

1 (7 oz) can of La Costeña Roasted Chipotle Peppers in Adobo Sauce (you won't be using the whole can)*

Approximately 16 oz. low-sodium veggie stock (I like Nature's Promise if you don't usually make your own)

2 teaspoons ground cumin

For garnish (optional): Sour cream and chopped green onions

*I bought one of those pre-packaged jobbies at the supermarket where it was already prepared since peeling/cubing butternut squash is such a chore. I dumped the whole thing into the pot, which according to the package was 20 oz. The original recipe calls for 1-1/2 cups. Really important, I think, is the adobo sauce/chili peppers so don't forgo this ingredient!

Directions:

Turn on your broiler. Slice the bell peppers in half, remove seeds/membranes, and place on a foil-lined baking sheet (or well-seasoned cast iron skillet) with skin sides up. Broil until the skins blacken. Once they're cool enough to handle, remove the skins and chop the peppers.

In a big soup pot (something with a heavy base and a lid) coat the bottom with the olive oil and on medium heat brown the onions, stirring occasionally. Next add the garlic and give it a couple more minutes--stir frequently so as to not let garlic burn.

Lower the heat to low/medium-low and add the chopped bell peppers and as much of the adobo sauce from the 7 oz can of chipotle peppers as you can scrape out (around 3 tablespoons.) This is the part where you can adjust the heat (flavor heat, not temp heat) of your chili. If you like things really spicy, you can also chop one or more of those chipotles and add it to the pot now. I like a mild kick so I only use the sauce. Either way, make sure you add an adequate amount of the adobo sauce because that's what's going to deepen the flavor of your chili. (Reserve the rest of the chipotle peppers for another recipe. They should keep, well-covered, for about 2 weeks.) Stir all this in and allow it to cook for a few more minutes until flavors are released.

Next, add the tomatoes (with their juice), squash and cumin. To that, add just enough veggie stock to barely cover everything in your pot. For me, that amounted to about 16 ounces of stock but depending on how much squash you add it might vary. You can add more or less stock depending on how thick you want your chili--this is a very forgiving recipe, I've found. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes or until squash is just about fork-tender.

Finally, add all the beans and simmer covered for about 15 more minutes. That's it! Serve and garnish with a dollop of sour cream and chopped green onions if you'd like.

You'll notice that I did not add any salt or any other spices apart from the cumin to this recipe. I don't think it needs it but please feel free to adjust to your own tastes. :)