

BLACK BEAN SOUP

The first time I had Black Bean Soup was in St. Croix during storm season. It sounded scary and didn't look very promising, but turned out to be delicious! It can be served alone as a soup of course, but is also very good served on top of a scoop of white rice in the bottom of the bowl.

INGREDIENTS:

6 Cups Water

12 ounces (2 Cups) dry Black Beans (Don't use canned beans or your soup will be an ugly gray)

1 rib Fennel, also known as Anise, roughly chopped

4 oz. Chorizo Sausage, casing removed

1 small Onion, diced

1 ½ teaspoon Salt

½ teaspoon Garlic Powder

½ teaspoon dried Cumin

1/8 teaspoon Cayenne Pepper (if you like it spicy, use ¼ -½ tsp. Remember, you can add more later, but you cannot take it out!)

Optional Toppings:

Sour Cream

Monterey Jack Cheese

Chopped Onion

Hot Sauce

DIRECTIONS:

Place the beans in a medium sized pot and cover with 6 cups of water. Remove any beans that float. Over high heat, bring the beans to a boil, stirring occasionally. When it starts to boil, add the remaining ingredients, then reduce the heat to a simmer, low. Simmer until the beans are fully tender, about 2 to 2 ½ hours.

Use an immersion blender to coarsely puree the soup, or puree in batches using a food processor or blender. Add water if necessary to make it a medium thick consistency. Taste it and season with salt as necessary.

Garnish with toppings as desired, grab a cold beer and enjoy.

167 calories/cup (not counting the toppings or the beer)

P.S. If you have leftovers, don't be surprised if you need to add a bit of water to get the consistency right again. It seems that after the beans are pureed, even though they were soft and tender, they absorb more moisture. Who knew!