



Red Beans & Rice

Ingredients:

Makes 8 generous servings.

1 pound red beans
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound andouille sausage, sliced 1/4"-thick, then halved
1 large onion, diced
1 green bell pepper, diced
3 stalks celery, diced
9 cloves garlic, finely minced
1 pound smoked ham hock or shank
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
3 bay leaves
3 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
6-8 cups chicken stock

Directions:

1. RINSE the dried beans in a colander and do a general inspection to remove any foreign pieces.
2. SOAK the beans in a large bowl filled with water for at least 8 hours or overnight. (see alternative soaking methods below). The dried beans rehydrate and soften during their soak and grow in size during the process. Cover the beans with plenty of water to ensure that they stay immersed during the process; add water if needed.
3. DRAIN the soaked beans in a colander and rinse well.
4. SAUTÉ the sliced andouille sausage "half-moons" in the olive oil until slightly browned on the edges. Remove the sausage and set aside on a plate, leaving any renderings in the pan.
5. ADD, while the pan is still hot, the onion, green pepper, and celery and sauté until just transparent, about 3-4 minutes. Add the garlic, stir, and sauté for another minute. Remove the pan from the heat.

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SLOW COOKER VERSION: (see Stovetop version below)

6. PLACE the sautéed vegetables in a slow cooker along with the soaked beans, smoked ham hock, vinegar, bay leaves, parsley, thyme, oregano, paprika, cayenne, salt, pepper and chicken stock. Cook on high for 3-4 hours, or until the beans become very tender. Add additional stock if needed to keep the beans covered.

7. Remove the ham hock to a plate and tease apart the meaty portions returning them to the pot. Discard any remaining fat or bones – they’ve done their work.

8. ADD the browned andouille sausage slices and cook for another 30 minutes while the rice is prepared and garnishes arranged.

9. COOK 2 cups of long grain white rice with 4 cups of water and a half teaspoon of salt until tender and the water absorbed, about 20-25 minutes.

10. Serve the beans alongside a helping of rice and garnish with sliced scallions and hot sauce on the side.

STOVETOP VERSION:

Instead of a slow cooker, use a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven or soup pot. Bring the pot to a low simmer and cook for 3-4 hours. Stir occasionally to prevent any sticking on the bottom of the pot.