

Vegetable Soup, Vegetarian and Meat Versions

At St. Junia's House, we have some folks who are vegetarians and others who are not, so I like to make soups where meat can be added for those who wish to add it. If desired, this recipe can be made up to 3 days in advance and stored in refrigerator until you're ready to use.

2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
2 Onions, chopped
1 Red or green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
Fresh mushrooms, or dried mushrooms hydrated and prepared
¼ cup chili powder
1 Tablespoon cumin
½ teaspoon of cayenne pepper
6 garlic cloves, minced (or dried, minced garlic)
2 (15.5 ounce) cans of dark red kidney beans, rinsed
1 (15.5 ounce) can of pinto beans
1 (15.5 ounce) can of corn
1 (28 ounce) can diced tomatoes
1 (28 ounce) can of tomato puree
Fresh small bok-choi or broccoli pieces
Generous dash of Marsala wine, or other red wine

1. Heat the oil in a large dutch oven if you have one, or otherwise in a large frying pan. Heat over medium heat until shimmering, add onions, bell pepper, chili powder, cumin, cayenne, and cook until veggies have softened, about 7 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for a few seconds.
2. Stir in the beans, diced tomatoes with their juice, corn without the juice, tomato puree, and mushrooms if you are using them. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook for 45 minutes. Add bok-choi or broccoli a few minutes before serving.
3. For the meat portion:

2 pounds of lean ground beef, sautéed, drained, set aside, or
2 pounds of beef stew, sautéed, then cooked slowly in chicken broth for 2 hours

Serving:

People can dip out a portion vegetarian soup, or if they want to add the meat, they can go light on the vegetarian broth portion, and then add a meat + broth portion.