



Spicy Vegetarian Chili

The level of spiciness in this vegetarian chili will depend on how much chili powder, and how many jalapeños you put in the chili. If you like things on the mild side, start with the smaller amounts of both, and add to taste.

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour, 10 minutes

Yield: Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

1-pound (450g) eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes

Olive oil

2 yellow onions, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 medium zucchini, chopped

2 large red bell peppers, cored, seeded, diced

1 to 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded, finely minced (Taste and check the heat of the jalapeños. If very hot only use one, if mildly hot, use two. Wash hands with soap and water after handling. Do not rub eyes.)

1 28-ounce (794g) can Italian plum tomatoes, coarsely chopped, including liquid (or 2 pounds fresh plum tomatoes, peeled and chopped)

1 Tbsp. ground cumin

1-2 Tbsp. chili powder
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh oregano or 2 teaspoons dried
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
1 1/2 cup cooked white beans (1 15-ounce or 425g can), drained and rinsed
1 1/2 cup cooked kidney beans (1 15-ounce or 425g can), drained and rinsed
Zest of one lemon
3 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 teaspoon sugar
1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro (can sub parsley if you have an aversion to cilantro)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

1 Roast the cubed eggplant: Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Scatter eggplant cubes in a shallow roasting pan and slather with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake for about 30 minutes, stirring once during the cooking. Remove from the oven and set aside.

2 Sauté the onions, garlic, peppers: While the eggplant is roasting, start on the rest of the vegetables. In a large (5-6 quart) thick-bottomed Dutch oven, heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil on medium heat. Add the onions and cook until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about a minute more. Add the red bell peppers, zucchini, and jalapeño chili peppers. Cook for about 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally.

3 Add the tomatoes, spices, chili, and roasted eggplant: Add the tomatoes to the pot along with any liquid that may have been in the can (if using canned). Add oregano, cumin, and fennel seeds. Add chili powder to desired heat. Stir in the eggplant cubes (carefully as to not break them up), and simmer for 20 minutes over low heat.

4 Add the beans, lemon, sugar, cilantro, salt, pepper: Add the white beans and kidney beans, lemon zest, lemon juice, sugar, and chopped cilantro. Add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Simmer for 5 minutes.

5 Serve with garnishes: Serve with sour cream, grated cheddar cheese, and chopped green onions.