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White Bean Chicken Chili

(Serves 10)

*Note-I recommend making this at least one or two days ahead, as the flavor gets better and better each day!

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds dried white navy beans
3-4 quarts chicken stock (keep an extra quart on hand in case you need more)
2 large onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, pressed
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
4 7-oz. cans Ortega chilies, chopped
2-3 tablespoons Masa Harina (corn flour for thickening chili)
1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt
4 teaspoons ground cumin
4 teaspoons dried oregano
4 teaspoons ground coriander (or 1-2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro)
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and diced
Garnishes
1 1/2 cups grated Monterey or mixed Mexican cheese
1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1/2 cup salsa
1/2 cup snipped fresh cilantro

DIRECTIONS

In a large soup pot, combine beans, stock and half the onion and garlic. Bring to a boil, uncovered. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 1 1/2 hours, or until beans are just cooked through, adding more stock as needed. (I like them cooked just to al dente, because they continue to cook every time you heat the soup.) Set aside with remaining broth.

In a separate large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons oil and add remaining onions, garlic and chilies. Cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add remaining tablespoon oil along with Masa Harina, herbs, spices and salt to onions and continue to cook until herbs begin to brown. This releases the flavors and also prevents the flour from becoming pasty in the soup.

Add pre-cooked, diced chicken and onion-herb mixture to the cooked beans in the pot, and stir well. Heat through and add more broth as needed or desired. I suggest refrigerating this soup for at least a day before serving. When ready to serve, reheat and pour hot soup into cups or bowls, sprinkle with grated cheese, a dollop of yogurt, a spoonful of salsa and a touch of cilantro.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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