

Chili

As the heat of summer abates, I look forward to making a pot of chili. This recipe is healthy and flavorful, and you have the option to make it with organic ground turkey; using grass-fed, pasture-raised ground sirloin; or make it vegetarian.

Chef's Note on Soaking and Cooking Beans

Pour your beans onto a cookie sheet and discard any that are shriveled or discolored (also discard any small rocks).

Rinse beans in a strainer. In a bowl, soak for 8-12 hours, as the beans will absorb the soaking water be sure they are covered in a couple of inches of water to start.

Soaking beans has four important benefits:

- It shortens the cooking time.
- They cook more evenly.
- They are easier to digest and they will cause less gas and bloating when you eat them.
- When you soak your own beans, you avoid canned beans that may be contaminated with toxins—BPA and BPS.

Rinse and drain the soaked beans (further reducing the compounds that cause bloating and gas formation). Add to a pot, cover with an inch of water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 hour. Add a teaspoon of salt to the liquid and test the beans about every 15 minutes to see if they are fully cooked. You want beans that are completely smooth, tender, and soft; if the beans are even a little "crunchy," they aren't done, but you also do not want to overcook them until they become mushy. Soaked beans typically take 75 to 100 minutes to cook, unsoaked beans take 2-3 hours to cook.

1 cup of dried beans will typically make 3 cups cooked, or 1 1/3 cup of dried beans to make 4 cups of cooked beans.

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Prep Time: 25-30 Minutes, plus the time to prepare the beans.

Makes: 6 Servings (which make great leftovers)

Ingredients:

4 cups cooked beans (pinto or dark red kidney beans), rinsed and drained

2 tablespoons avocado oil

1 medium white onion, chopped

½ teaspoon sea salt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

2 medium celery stalks, chopped

1 teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon ground cumin

1 pound organic ground turkey (or organic, grass-fed sirloin; or vegetarian crumbled burger)

4 medium garlic cloves, chopped

2 cups chopped tomatoes

1 red bell pepper, seeds and stem removed, chopped

2 cups organic corn (frozen, jarred, or fresh)

1-4 teaspoons chili powder (add to taste)

¼-½ teaspoon cayenne pepper to taste (optional)

½ cup low-sodium broth (vegetarian broth or chicken stock)

¼ cup chopped cilantro

Optional Garnish: 1 avocado cubed and/or ¼ cup organic sour cream

Directions:

Rinse and drain cooked beans and set aside.

Heat a large pot to medium-high heat, add avocado oil, then onion, salt, and black pepper, stirring occasionally for 2-3 minutes until onion softens. Add celery, oregano, and cumin and heat for another 2 minutes with an occasional stir. Add ground turkey, (ground sirloin, or vegetarian crumbles, stir frequently to break up the big clumps and heat until lightly browned.

Reduce to medium heat, add garlic, tomatoes, bell pepper, and corn. Heat another 5 minutes with an occasional stir. Add chili powder and/or cayenne pepper to taste, then stir in broth, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes.

Just prior to serving, stir in cilantro. To serve, garnish individual bowls with cubed avocado and/or sour cream.

Enjoy,

Steven Masley, MD