



Black Bean and Butternut Squash Stew*

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

- 4 cups (26 ounces) peeled, seeded and diced butternut squash (3/4 inch)
- ¼ cup good olive oil, divided, plus more as needed
- 1 large yellow onion, diced (about 11 ounces which is big)
- ½ teaspoon sea salt, plus more to taste
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and diced ½ inch (about 1 ¼ cups)
- ½ large bunch (2 ounces) fresh cilantro leaves and stems, plus more for garnish (optional)
- 8 cloves garlic (I didn't have any, but I am sure it would be good)
- ¾ teaspoon dried basil
- Three (15-ounce) cans black beans (about 5 cups), drained and liquid reserved (instead I did 1 ½ c black beans in my Pressure Cooker with 5 cups water and vegetables. Send me a note if you want exact directions)
- One (28-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Cooked rice, quinoa or couscous, for serving (optional)

Instructions

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine the squash, 2 tablespoons olive oil and the salt and toss to combine. Spread over a rimmed baking sheet and roast for about 15 minutes, or just until the squash can be easily pierced with a fork. Remove from the oven and set aside.

In a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat, heat the remaining 2 Tbsp olive oil until shimmering. Add the onions and cook, stirring until the edges start to brown, about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions turn light brown, about 10 minutes.

While the onions are cooking, in a bowl of a food processor, combine the bell pepper, cilantro and garlic in a nutribullet or blender and pulse until very finely chopped and uniform but not fully smooth — this is your sofrito.

Add the sofrito to the pot and raise the heat to medium. Add the dried basil and stir until aromatic, about 1 minute. Add the beans, roasted butternut squash and stir to combine.

Add the tomato sauce, tomato paste and 1 scant cup bean cooking liquid or water. Taste and add more salt, if needed. Bring the stew to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and cook until slightly thickened, 7 to 10 minutes. If you prefer a thicker stew, simmer, uncovered, for a few more minutes, until your desired consistency is reached.

To serve, ladle the stew into shallow bowls or over couscous, quinoa or rice, and garnish with cilantro, full fat yogurt and a drizzle of fruity olive oil.

*** Recipe adapted from Ruth Terry in Istanbul!**