



Vegetarian's Secret Chili

Add a touch of umami rich mushrooms

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped sweet bell mixed colored peppers (red, yellow, orange)
- 8 ounces mini Bella mushrooms, washed, trim, slice, chop
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon (each) cumin; chili powder; Italian seasoning
- 2 to 4 cups vegetable stock, as needed
- 1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans, drained
- 1 (15 ounce) can cannellini beans, drained
- 1 (15 ounce) can tri-bean blend, drained
- 1 (14 ounce) can petite diced tomatoes with juice
- 1 (14 ounce) can crushed tomatoes

1 cup chunky tomato salsa (mild or medium)
1 Tablespoon white Balsamic vinegar
2 to 3 teaspoons pesto sauce, optional
Salt; ground black pepper to taste
1 small zucchini, sliced, chopped
2 to 3 Tablespoons chopped parsley
As desired: shaved Parmesan cheese or nutritional yeast

Place oil in a Dutch oven pot, stir in carrots, onions, and celery; cook over medium high heat for 5 minutes; add peppers and mushrooms; cook stirring frequently for 5 minutes or until softened; add garlic, cumin, chili powder, and Italian seasoning; cook for 2 minutes to combine seasonings. Mix in 3 cups vegetable stock; add kidney beans, cannellini beans, tri-bean blend, diced tomatoes, crushed tomatoes, and salsa; bring to a boil; partially cover pot; reduce heat to simmer; cook for 20 minutes.

Stir in vinegar and pesto sauce. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Add zucchini; cook for about 5 minutes to soften zucchini. Let chili rest about 15 minutes before serving. Sprinkle bowls of chili with chopped parsley before serving. A light sprinkle of shaved Parmesan or nutritional yeast adds another layer of flavor. Yield: Serves about 12

Cook's Note: Like most chili dishes, this dish “winters” well in the refrigerator overnight, combining all the flavors. Many of the ingredients are canned tomatoes and beans so we tried to use low salt or no salt products.

About the Recipe: The secret to the delicious flavor of this chili is the wide variety of vegetables added, umami mushrooms, and the different kinds of beans used. There are so many layers of flavor in this chili.