

Vegetarian Chili

2 28 oz. cans of Italian plum tomatoes
4 ears of fresh corn, corn taken off the cob
1 very large Vidalia onion, diced
4 large cloves of garlic, crushed
3 large zucchini, in 1/2 inch dice
1 19 oz can of black beans
2 19 oz cans of red kidney beans
4 Tbsp. canola or olive oil
1 Tbsp. cornmeal (as needed)
1 Tbsp. cocoa powder
1 Tbsp. Dona Maria OR La Costena Mole Verde (more to taste)
1 Tbsp. Dona Maria Mole OR La Costena Mole (more to taste)
1/4 small stick cinnamon - ground is okay, but TASTE..it's just a HINT
2 whole cloves - ground is okay but, yep, see above!
1/2 Tbsp. Ancho Chili powder (or to taste)
1/2 Tbsp. Pasilla Chili Powder (or to taste)
1/2 Tbsp. ground cumin (or to taste)
McCormick's Mexican Style Chili powder (to taste)
Salt: you know what you like. Pepper: to taste
Water: to thin chili if you like it thinner or if it thickens too much

In a pot big enough to hold all ingredients sauté onion, garlic, and zucchini in oil until it loses its raw look. Add ground spices (NOT THE COCOA) and sauté until the smell releases a bit.

Add tomatoes, beans (I use the liquid too), cocoa powder, cinnamon stick if using, both moles, 1/2 of the corn, and cook down until it has become a harmonious chili and not a raw mess...about 30 minutes on medium heat...don't let it boil hard.

Keep tasting. Add more spices if you want-you know how you like your chili! Salt and pepper to taste. Before serving add the rest of the corn and cook for 5-6 minutes. Add corn meal to thicken if necessary. If you do, cook another 5 minutes or so to allow the cornmeal to thicken the chili. Serve with sour cream, sharp cheddar and cornbread. Feeds 6.

My mother made chili a lot. She made it because it was filling, because it was cheap, and because we loved it. She made it with ground beef, beans, and supermarket spices... zucchini would have been considered an abomination. She would always start it right after my brother and I flew through the door after school and by dinner time the house would smell exactly like what we were about to dip our spoons into. Chili never really disappoints. How could anything served with a big glob of sour cream and a handful of grated cheese be anything but grin worthy?

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