Ranch Style Cowboy Beans

©*From the Kitchen of Deep South Dish*

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1 pound package dried pinto beans (*or substitute canned)
8 cups water
1 pound ground chuck or breakfast sausage, *browned and well drained*
1 medium Vidalia or other sweet onion, *chopped*
1/2 a medium green bell pepper, *chopped*
2 cloves garlic, *chopped*
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon Liquid Smoke, *optional*
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper, *or to taste*
1 (10 ounce) can Rotel or regular diced tomatoes, *undrained*

Soak beans overnight, drain and rinse. Return to the pot and add 8 cups of fresh water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, cover and simmer for 1 hour or until tender. Meanwhile, cook ground beef or sausage until browned; drain off excess oil and add the onion, bell pepper and garlic, cooking another 2 minutes. Add beans and all of the remaining ingredients except for the tomatoes; simmer for 30 minutes. Add the tomatoes and simmer another 30 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings.

Serve alone, as a side dish, or over hot, cooked rice. Great with cornmeal hoe cakes or cornbread, pickled onion and pass the hot sauce at the table.

Cook's Notes: The ground beef is optional as these beans are quite good on their own. I really like using raw breakfast sausage. Use the speed method if you don't have time for an overnight soak. Place beans in a dutch oven and cover with water plus about an inch. Bring to a boil and boil for about 1 minute, cover, remove from the heat and set aside for 1 hour. Drain and proceed with the recipe. If beans have been in the pantry awhile, you will likely need additional cook time to soften them. May also substitute 4 (15 ounce) cans of pinto beans, drained and rinsed. Garnish with chopped, cooked bacon, if desired. I also like a little fresh cilantro if I have it.

Crockpot: Soak beans overnight, drain and rinse and place into crockpot. Cover the beans with 5 cups of very hot water and stir in remaining ingredients, except for tomatoes. Cook on high until beans are tender, 6 to 8 hours, or low 9 to 12 hours. Length of time will depend on freshness of beans. When done, remove 1 cup of beans and mash, return to the crockpot and stir in tomatoes; cover and cook another 5 minutes. Taste, add salt if needed and adjust seasonings. **(continued page 2)**

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For the Instant Pot: Add dry pinto beans to pot and cover with water plus 2 inches (about 6 cups) and add a tablespoon of butter. Seal and set on manual for 6 minutes. Turn off pot, let pressure release naturally, drain. Set pot to saute, add oil and ground beef or pork to pot and cook until browned. Drain off excess fat. Return beef and beans to pot, add onions, bell pepper, garlic, Rotel and seasonings. Stir in 3 cups beef broth (or water with beef base). Seal and set on high for 25 minutes. Let pressure release naturally for 10 minutes, release any remaining pressure. Turn pot off, then turn to saute and boil until thickened, if desired, or make a cornstarch slurry and stir into boiling beans; taste and adjust seasonings as needed.

Source: DeepSouthDish.com Website

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