

Rice and Beans (and Vegetables)

This is a standard meal in my house – has been for quite a few years. Since my wife and I became “pisco-vegetarians” (we eat fish, but no meat or poultry), we have strived to find high protein meals without animal products. This is THE standard for such meals. The added advantage is that this meal is incredibly inexpensive, and can be prepared just once a week and provide you with multiple meals during the week. We typically make this on Saturday or Sunday night, and eat it at least a few times during the week – pretty much every week!

There are many twists on this recipe – you can add almost anything you want – veggie dogs, tofu, spinach, kale, peas, chopped up string beans, crumbled up Boca Burgers – even meat if you are so inclined (we are not). The way we make it, a better name would be black bean and vegetable stew. OK. Now for the recipe.

Ingredients:

- 1 good-sized Vidalia onion – peeled and chopped
- 1 head of garlic (10-15 cloves) – peeled and sliced up (many recipes call for “2 cloves” - oh, come on, this is garlic! I never use less than half a head of garlic in any recipe! Garlic is good for you!!)
- 3 pints of tomato sauce (we make this ourselves in the fall from our own tomatoes – boil it down until it is heaven-on-earth tomato sauce – if you don't have a garden, just pick up some nice tomato sauce)
- 1 cup of frozen corn (or canned corn – whatever) – fresh if you are lucky to have some
- 1 cup of frozen peas – fresh if you are lucky to have them
- 4 tsp of cumin
- 2-3 tsp of ground tumeric
- 2-4 Tbsp of olive oil
- 3 cans of black beans – Goya is easily available at Price Rite



- 8 cups of kale or more (I added this for more umph – advice in old England to a new physician was “if you pass by a town in which you are interested in setting up a practice and kale is growing in their gardens, move on to another town – these people will not need your services!!”)
 - 1 cup of brown rice (cooked in 2.5 cups of water)
 - ¼ tsp of salt
 - 4 good squirts of Goya Sazon Liquido (about 4-8 Tbsp)
 - 2-3 cups of chopped mushrooms – I prefer the baby portabella mushrooms
- Optional vegetables
 - 1 large or 2 small zucchini – shredded
 - 2 cups of pumpkin – yes, when in season, I add this. I seed and cut up a pumpkin, then

put it in the oven in a covered pan with a little water and bake at 350 for 20 minutes or so. Let it cool, and cut off the skin (much easier after it cooks) – then dice it up for the rice and beans

- 2 cups of string beans – it is best to chop these into small segments (½ inch or so)
- 2 cups of broccoli – chopped into very small pieces

OK, now we are ready to COOK! This recipe is REALLY simple.

Start with a large pan – put in a few Tbsp of extra virgin olive oil. Toss in the onion and saute until the onions are a bit translucent – then toss in the garlic. If you are using mushrooms, add them with the garlic. Just before the garlic starts to brown, toss in the kale with an ounce of water, and cover. Stir every minute or two.



While you are working on the garlic/onion/kale – measure out 1 cup of brown rice. Measure out 2.5 cups of water. In a medium-sized sauce pan, boil the water with about ¼ tsp of salt (I just measure a bit in the palm of my hand and throw it in). When the water is boiling, throw in the rice and set on simmer until all the water is absorbed – then turn it off and let it sit (to absorb all the moisture).

Once the kale is starting to wilt (maybe about 5 minutes or so), move on to the next step. Add 3 pints of tomato sauce, the 4 tsp of cumin, the 2-3 tsp of tumeric, the 1 cup of corn, 1 cup of peas, and the 3 cans of black beans. At some point, add whatever else you want – if you have a garden and grow zucchini, you KNOW what happens around mid-season – zucchini everywhere! You can shred this and freeze it to add to this recipe during the winter.



You don't have to add all the ingredients – mushrooms, peas, corn, zucchini, string beans, broccoli, pumpkin – just add a few to the recipe and vary it every time you make it. That will add variety, and you may find a version you really, really like. The plate to the left has fresh avocado around the roasted kale with a granish of fresh tomatoes – wonderful!!

Simmer the bean mixture for an hour or so. Taste it periodically – when the mixture seems to be coalescing into a delicious soupy creation, throw in the brown rice and serve.

You now have a large vat of rice and beans that you can eat for the next week. After eating what you want on the day of preparation, chill it (in the winter, we use our garage as our secondary refrigerator) and simply microwave portions over the next week for delicious and nutritious meals.



Serve with an additional side of vegetables – yes, MORE vegetables. Vegetables RULE!!