

# Black Bean and Sweet Potato Soup

This is one of my favorite soups. The savory beans against the sweet potatoes is such a wonderful contrast on the palette. As a piece of advice when making his soup. I like to mix all of my seasonings, minus the salt, together before making the soup. FYI, if you do that you'll be making a Southwest seasoning blend. I actually make big batches of this stuff and keep it in my pantry, which isn't a bad idea if you want to have an easy seasoning on hand for a quick breakfast burrito or something like that. The reason we don't add the salt out of the gate is that cooking beans with salt makes their hulls hard and you'll end up with tough beans rather than creamy beans. That's a rule of thumb for cooking all beans so don't forget!

1 qt dried black beans, soaked 4 hours then drained, then cooked to tenderness, remove from heat and reserve cooking liquid

1 yellow onion, diced

1 Tbs garlic

½ tsp cayenne

½ Tbs cumin

½ Tbs chili powder

1 tsp black pepper

1 tsp T smoked paprika

½ tsp crushed red pepper

1 tsp coriander

1 tsp granulated onion

1 tsp granulated garlic

Salt as needed

2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½" dice

Vegetable oil

Pinch of salt

½ tsp cinnamon

½ tsp ground clove

Preheat the oven to 400. In a mixing bowl combine the sweet potatoes, cinnamon, salt, and clove. Add just enough oil to coat the potatoes and toss thoroughly. Transfer mixture to a sheet pan and roast in the oven for 30 minutes or until potatoes are just fork tender. Remove from oven and let cool completely.

Heat a large pot over medium high heat. When it's hot, add some oil, just enough to coat the bottom, and then the onions and garlic. Sauté until you start to get just a little color. Add all the spices (not the salt!) and sauté briefly, maybe 30 seconds, to allow the spices to bloom. Add the black beans and the cooking liquid. Bring the mixture to temperature, then reduce the heat and let simmer for 30 minutes to allow all of the flavors to marry. Right before serving, add the sweet potatoes and fold it all together and taste it for salt. You can adjust the consistency of the soup to your liking by adding more water to loosen it. If you'd like to thicken it I suggest pulling some of the beans out of the soup, pureeing them in a food processor, then return them to the soup.

I like to serve my soup with a dollop of sour cream and some fresh chopped cilantro. Enjoy!