

Slow-Simmered Beans & Ham Hocks - A Southern Staple Done Right

1 pound dried pinto or white beans



TIME
5 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound dried pinto or white beans
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 tablespoon Creole seasoning
- 1 teaspoon beef bouillon powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 pounds smoked ham hocks (about 2)
- 2 cups beef stock
- 3 cups water
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Soak :** Beans: Place dried beans in a bowl, cover with water by 3 inches, and soak overnight (or up to 24 hours). Drain and rinse when ready.
- 2. SautØ Aromatics:** In a large 6-quart pot, heat olive oil over medium. Add onion, celery, garlic, thyme, and carrots. Cook 4-5 minutes until softened.
- 3. Add :** Seasonings: Stir in Creole seasoning, bouillon powder, and cayenne pepper. Let bloom for 1 minute.
- 4. Combine :** Ingredients: Add soaked beans and ham hocks. Pour in beef stock and water. Stir to mix.
- 5. Simmer:** Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer gently for 90 minutes until beans are tender and broth is thickened.
- 6. Shred the :** Ham: Use tongs to remove ham hocks. Shred meat with a fork and return it (and bones, if you like) to the pot.
- 7. Final :** Seasoning: Add water if needed. Simmer another 10 minutes. Taste and adjust salt and pepper.
- 8. Serve:** Spoon into bowls and serve hot with cornbread or rice.

SWAPS & NOTES

Beans : Pinto beans are classic, but navy or great northern beans work great too.

Spice Level : Adjust cayenne to your heat preference, or add a few dashes of hot sauce near the end.

Flavor Boosters : Smoked paprika or bay leaves can be added during simmering for extra depth.

Smoked turkey wings or leftover ham shank are good substitutes.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use a Large Pot : A 6-quart Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot works best.

Do a quick soak by boiling beans for 5 minutes and letting them sit for 1 hour.

For Creamier Beans : Mash a few beans near the end of cooking to thicken the stew naturally.

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