

OLD MAN'S REFRIED BEANS

I think this was an extension of carnitas. As with that, I don't think there is any way that these could be considered authentic. I may have, however, learned a VERY important lesson with this. Not quite 100% sure yet (we'll find out), but when I have been experimenting with dried beans recently, they never really seemed to get tender and took FOREVER to cook. After poking around a bit I found that, apparently, if you expose beans to acid, their skins toughen up. This, in turn, makes it harder for them to absorb water and therefore takes longer for them to cook to tender. My problem? Well, I thought I would be all fancy pants and use yogurt whey to soak the beans. Guess what? YOGURT WHEY IS ACIDIC!!!! Lesson learned (I hope)

Oh, by the way, I believe these are traditionally made with pinto beans. I thought I had pinto beans when I first tried this, but I did not. I did, however, have black beans. HOORAY!!!

INGREDIENTS

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
1	1 lb bag	Dried Black Beans
AR	-----	DISTILLED WATER!!!
AR	-----	Kosher Salt
AR	-----	Accent (MSG)
1	16 oz. pack	REGULAR Bacon
2	-----	Decent sized sweet or Vidalia Onions
1/2	lb	Jalapenos
1	32 oz. Box	Beef Broth with No Salt Added
1	-----	Large Clove of Garlic
AR	-----	Pinot Grigio
1	Heaping TSP	Ground Cumin
1	Heaping TSP	Mexican Oregano
2	-----	Fresh Bay Leaves

OK... distilled water... My water is pretty acidic. Based on my fears of acid and beans, I am going to go with distilled water

Insert standard blurbs about kosher salt, bacon, etc here

By the way, not maple, not pepper, not ANYTHING but REGULAR OL' BACON!

If you are not a fan of the heat, decrease the amount of jalapenos or leave out, but I recommend you keep at least one in

If you can't find Mexican oregano, regular ol' oregano should work

Yes, the bay leaves need to be fresh; it makes a world of difference. Check the produce section of your grocery store where the other fresh herbs are sold

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Toaster oven with broiler [ii]
- Spider
- Paper Bag [v]

PREPARATION

NIGHT BEFORE

- 1) Sort through the beans and remove any sticks, stones, dirt, foreign debris, etc
- 2) Rinse the beans through a strainer or colander
- 3) Put the beans in a largish pot and cover with at least 3 times their height in distilled water (they will expand) [vi]
- 4) Cover pot and let sit in a coolish place over night. If you have room in the fridge, stick them in there [i]

DAY (MAYBE MORNING) OF

- 1) Fine dice the pack of bacon and add to a large stainless steel fry pan
- 2) Put on the lid and heat the pan [iii] on lowish
- 3) Cook bacon LOW AND SLOW. The idea is to render out the fat and get some nice brown bacon bits to boot. If it is making too much noise or browning too fast, the pan is too hot!
- 4) Stir the bacon occasionally as it cooks with a flat edge wood spoon
- 5) Rinse and fine dice the two sweet / Vidalia onions and put them in a Tupperware container in the fridge until needed
- 6) Rinse ½ lb of jallies and cut off the stems
- 7) Dry the jallies and put in a ¼ sheet pan
- 8) Place the sheet pan in your toaster oven in the broiler position and set it to 500 deg. F for 3 min
- 9) Turn one ¼ turn and broil at 500 deg. F for another 3 min
- 10) Repeat step 9 until the jallie skins are blackened and blistered all the way around
- 11) Place the jallies in a brown paper bag, roll the top down so it is “sealed” and set aside on the counter for about 15 minutes or until you get back to it
- 12) Once the bacon fat has rendered out and the bacon bits are nice and brown, strain the bacon fat through a metal strainer into a 1 quart measuring cup
- 13) Return the bacon fat to the stainless steel pan
- 14) Keep the bacon bits in the strainer over the 1 quart measuring cup to get as much additional bacon fat as possible
- 15) Cover the strainer with a saucer
- 16) Add additional drained bacon fat to the pan as it drips out
- 17) Add the onions to the pan and cover with the lid
- 18) Set the timer for 10 minutes
- 19) When the 10 minute onion timer goes off, remove the lid and stir with a wood spoon

- 20) Continue to cook the onions stirring occasionally, until they are light brown, just past blond
- 21) Fill a 1 quart measuring cup with 4 cups of distilled water
- 22) Pull out the roasted peppers and submerge each one in the water and rub lightly to remove the skins
- 23) Gently dry the jalapenos with paper towels. Get as much excess liquid off as possible
- 24) Dice the skinned peppers and in a Tupperware container in the fridge until needed
- 25) Strain the jallie water through a metal strainer into a big pot and discard the skins
- 26) Add the box o' beef broth to the big pot
- 27) Add 4 cups of distilled water to the big pot
- 28) Mince the garlic and set aside until needed
- 29) Measure out the Mexican oregano and ground cumin and set aside until needed
- 30) Once the onions have reached light brown, just past blond, add the diced roasted jallies
- 31) Drain the beans and add them and the bay leaves to the big pot and heat to a boil
- 32) When the beans have reached a boil, reduce the heat to maintain a simmer
- 33) Cook the beans until they are nice and tender. Depending on who you talk to and how old your beans are, this could take anywhere from 30 mins to several hours [vii]
- 34) When the onions and peppers have reached just short of a nice deep brown, add the minced garlic
- 35) Cook the onions, etc until nicely deep brown stirring occasionally. Deglaze with Pinot Grigio as (or if) needed
- 36) Once the onions, peppers, and garlic are done, stir in the Mexican oregano and cumin
- 37) If the onions, garlic, and jallies finish before the beans, set heat to VERY LOW and cover the pan with the lid. If the beans finish first, remove heat and cover the pot
- 38) Transfer the beans to the pan with the onions, etc with a spider.
- 39) Strain the bean cooking water through a strainer into a bowl to get the last remaining beans and transfer them to the pan. DON'T GET RID OF THE BEAN LIQUID YET!!!
- 40) Stir beans, onions, etc until everything is nicely incorporated
- 41) Mash beans with a potato masher [iv]. Add bean liquid a little bit at a time as necessary and continue to mash to achieve your desired level of consistency [viii]
- 42) Stir in the bacon bits
- 43) Taste for seasoning and add salt and / or MSG as necessary
- 44) Stir and let heat on very low for 10 minutes. Add bean water as necessary to maintain your desired consistency
- 45) Plate
- 46) ENJOY!!!

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Wow! Another winner! Nice kick from the jallies, but it might be a bit much for normal humans. I think I may want to try this with tomato paste at some point, adding it to the onions and peppers at the same time as the minced garlic. Another thing that I may try at some point is adding orange zest, probably close to when the onions etc. are done. I almost did it this time, but I talked myself out of it.

And by the way... I started this at about noon and they were ready to eat by about 1530. I decided to put them in the fridge for dinner later and to let the flavors meld, but that did not stop me from "taste testing"

NOTES

- i. If it is too warm, they might start to ferment which, long story short, could impede cooking
- ii. Is a toaster oven considered a special piece of equipment? Well, I am not totally sure. I wound up buying one after continually wishing to have multiple ovens to cook things and never really liking my oven's broiler. It wound up sitting on my kitchen floor for God knows how long before I set it up. Guess what? It is FANTASTIC, particularly for this!
- iii. One of my more expensive kitchen tools, but I love my AllClad!
- iv. An immersion blender or food processor will also work. They might even be preferable if you want to go for a very smooth consistency. Some may call this blasphemy, but some may swear by it.
- v. Yes, I put paper bag under special equipment. I just get the feeling that most households will not have these around these days
- vi. The last time I made this, I did not add enough water. When I checked on them the next morning, the beans were peaking up above the water line
- vii. This last time, it took about 40 minutes after the beans reached a boil
- viii. I wound up adding 1 cup at first (yes, I realize that is not a little bit) then $\frac{1}{4}$ cup near the end

PICTURES

None yet!!!