



Chef Russ

Red Beans & Rice

Ingredients:

2 lbs of red pinto beans
4 cloves of Garlic
1 medium onion cut in as many sections as you want
¾ lb salt pork, cubed and with the rind removed
Chili powder
Salt
Pepper

Preparation:

Making beans that taste good is an art form, and defies exact portions of ingredients. For the picnic, I am going to start with two pounds of dry beans. I will wash the beans by filling the pot they are in with water, and emptying it. I will do this several times. When I am convinced the beans are reasonably clean, I will cover them with water, and let them soak overnight.

At least three hours before they are to be served, add enough water to the pot of beans to cover the now water swollen beans, plus two to three inches more as measured on the side of the pot. Mince the garlic and add it to the pot. Put the pot on the stove on high heat. Salt the water, maybe a table spoon and a half. When the water comes to a vigorous boil cut the heat back until the water is briskly simmering.

After thirty minutes, check the beans by taking one out of the pot and mashing it with a fork. When a bean is still fairly firm, but can also be mashed easily, it is time to put the other ingredients in. It is probably best to add only a half tablespoon of pepper to begin with, since it is real easy to over pepper. Chili powder is the same. We're making beans here, not chili. Add two tablespoons of chili powder to begin with.

Cut the heat way back, and cover. Keep checking the water level, and add water in small doses, always keeping the beans covered with water, as needed. After forty five minutes, taste the water and add more of whatever ingredients are needed to make the beans come up to your own personal impeccable taste. Just be careful with the pepper. It gets more dominant as the water boils down.

After an hour start checking the beans by taking one out and mashing it. As soon as the beans can be easily mashed with no resistance they are about ready. At this point, taste the water again, and determine if anything else needs to be added. Let them simmer, covered, for fifteen minutes after they reach this state. After the fifteen minutes are up, give them a taste test. They should be ready to eat.

For rice, follow the directions on the package.