



Caribbean

Black Beans and Rice

- 1 pound bag dried black beans
- 4 quarts water
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1 1/3 cups olive oil
- 2 onions, peeled and finely chopped
- 12 cloves garlic, peeled, finely chopped
- 12 small sweet chili peppers, seeded and finely chopped (or your choice combo of hot peppers)
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon whole dried oregano, crushed
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 4 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Cumin Scented Rice, recipe follows

Pick over beans, discarding any shriveled ones or foreign particles. Wash well and soak, covered in water, for 4 hours. Drain beans and place in 4 quarts of water in a soup pot. Add ham hock to the beans. Bring rapidly to a boil. Reduce heat to moderate and simmer beans until tender, about 35 to 45 minutes.

In a sauté pan, heat 1 and 1/3 cups olive oil. Add the chopped onions and garlic to the pan and sauté over low heat. Add the chopped chilies and season with salt and pepper. Add the bay leaves and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add 1 cup of drained black beans to the onion mixture in the sauté pan, and mash thoroughly with rest of the ingredients in the skillet. Stir in the sugar and the dried oregano.

Add the bean and onion mixture to the bean pot. Cover, and simmer for 1 hour, at moderate heat. Add red wine, vinegar, 4 teaspoons dried oregano and cumin. Uncover and cook until sauce thickens. Serve hot.

Cumin Scented Rice

- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
- 3 cups uncooked basmati rice
- 2 small limes, juiced
- 6 cups cold water
- 2 teaspoons salt

Heat butter over medium heat in a large saucepan. When butter is melted, add cumin seeds and sauté for 1 minute. Stir in the rice and cook for 2 minutes.

Turn the heat to high and add the lime juice, water and salt. Mix well. Bring to boil on high heat. Reduce heat and cook covered on low for 15 minutes until water evaporates.

