

Feijoada

Pronounced “fey-ZHWAH-duh”, this dish features black turtle beans flavored with smoked pork and is usually served over white rice. It is the national dish of Brazil. I like to load it down with extra hot peppers during cold weather. It freezes well (I have never been able to resist it for more than a month, but I guess it would keep for several months in a sealed container) and, according to some, tastes better after having sat for a while (“festered”). Really good in winter, served with hot crusty bread, cold beer and a green salad.

- 1 lb dried black turtle beans
- 3 large green peppers, chopped (red and yellow make the dish more colorful)
- 2 large yellow onions, chopped
- 6 to 8 large cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1/2 C olive oil
- 3 C water
- 1 12-oz can beer (for added richness, use Guinness)
- 1 1/2 lbs smoked ham hocks, as meaty as possible
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 t salt
- 1/4 C red wine vinegar
- 1 T brown sugar
- 1 T honey
- Hearty dash of Tabasco
- Hearty dash of Worcestershire
- 3 dried red Cayenne peppers (whole if you intend to remove them, otherwise crushed)

Prep the beans

Sort and wash the beans, then cover to a depth of 2”. Soak overnight. The resulting liquid will look like watery ink, and will stain clothing if you’re not careful. (If you forget to prep the beans a day ahead, no big—just add another hour to the cooking time, below.)

Cooking

Heat the olive oil in a large stock pot and sauté the peppers, onions and garlic until tender. Drain the beans. Stir the beans into the vegetables, then add the water and beer (or stout). Add all remaining ingredients *except* the vinegar. Stir thoroughly, making sure that the ham hocks are embedded in the beans. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to low. Simmer uncovered, 1.5 to 2 hours or until beans are tender (longer, if desired; it’s hard to overcook this dish). Stir occasionally.

When the beans are tender, remove the ham hocks. Separate the meat from the fat, skin and bones. Discard the bones, etc. and add the chopped meat back into the bean mixture. Add the vinegar and cook about 20 to 30 more minutes. For a thicker sauce, mash a few beans against the side of the pot with the cooking spoon. Serve over steamed white rice.

When is it done?

As a rule of thumb, I used to do all the preparations (except soaking the beans) during *All Things Considered* on a Saturday night, and have it coming to the boil about the time *A Prairie Home Companion* started. Around the end of GK’s monologue, I would remove the meat from the bones and add the vinegar, and also start the rice. By the end of the show, it would be almost ready. I guess this dates me. Call it approximately three hours.