

Smoky Kidney Bean Stew (1-Pot)

Prep: 20 minutes • Cook: 1 hour 10 minutes

A hearty, Cajun-inspired stew with smoky depth, creamy tomatoes, and meaty texture from red or brown lentils. Comforting yet vibrant, it's easily made in one pot on the Instant Pot or stovetop and is naturally gluten-free, soy-free, and nut-free.

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons oil
- 1 to 1 1/2 cups red onion (chopped)
- 4 cloves garlic (finely chopped)
- 1/2 cup celery (chopped)
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1/2 to 1 cup tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon Mexican chili powder blend
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt (divided)
- 1 1/2 cups dried kidney beans (soaked overnight and drained)
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup red lentils or brown lentils
- 2 cups or more water or stock
- 2 tablespoons mild green chiles
- pinch cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- to taste onion (chopped, for topping)
- to taste jalapeños (chopped, for topping)
- to taste vegan sour cream (for topping)
- to taste lime wedges (for serving)
- to taste tortilla strips (for topping)

Instructions

1. Instant Pot (using dried beans): Set the Instant Pot to Sauté and heat the oil. Add onion, garlic, and a pinch (about 1/8

- tsp) salt; cook 3–4 minutes, splashing in water as needed to prevent sticking and encourage browning.
2. Add celery and red bell pepper; cook 1 minute.
 3. Stir in tomato paste and tomatoes with a splash of water; cook 3–4 minutes until incorporated and jammy.
 4. Add bay leaves, Mexican chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, cocoa powder, onion powder, and the remaining salt; cook 1–2 minutes to bloom the spices.
 5. Add soaked and drained kidney beans, lentils, and water or stock; stir well and scrape the bottom to prevent sticking.
 6. Cancel Sauté. Pressure cook on Bean mode (or High Pressure) for 1 hour; let pressure release naturally.
 7. Open the lid, check bean doneness, and season to taste with additional salt. If beans aren't tender, pressure cook 15–20 minutes more.
 8. Adjust consistency with more water if needed. Adjust spices (more chili powder or smoked paprika to taste) and finish with a squeeze of lime juice. Serve hot with toppings.
 9. Stovetop (using cooked beans): In a large saucepan over medium heat, follow the same sauté steps (oil, onion/garlic, then celery/pepper, then tomato paste/tomatoes, then spices).
 10. Add 3–4 cups cooked kidney beans (2–3 cans, drained), lentils, and 2 cups water. Partially cover and simmer 35–40 minutes until lentils are tender, adding water as needed.
 11. Mash some beans and lentils to thicken; simmer about 15 minutes more. Adjust salt and spices, finish with lime, and serve with toppings.
 12. Instant Pot (using cooked/canned beans): After sautéing as above, add cooked beans, lentils, and about 1/4 cup less water. Pressure cook 25 minutes; natural release, adjust seasoning, and serve.

Tags: One Pot, Cajun, Vegan, Gluten Free, High Protein, Stew
