

Black Bean Soup – Crock Pot Style

12 oz. dried black beans
8 cups chicken or vegetable stock
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 cup carrots, chopped
1 cup celery, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 bay leaf
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 ham bone (optional)
Fresh cilantro (optional)
Sour Cream (optional)
Grated White Cheddar Cheese (optional)

Rinse and sort through black beans, discarding any that are shriveled or discolored. Place beans in a large stockpot. Cover beans with water and refrigerate to soak overnight. Drain beans and place in crock pot. Add stock and heat to boiling.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil over medium-high heat in a large skillet. Add onion, carrot, celery and garlic and saute until tender, approximately 5 minutes. Add to crock pot along with oregano, thyme, bay leaf and cayenne pepper. Cover crock pot and cook on low for 5 to 6 hours.

To thicken soup, use a hand blender to puree to desired thickness. Just before serving add lime juice and garnish with a sprig of fresh cilantro, white cheddar and sour cream, if desired. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve.

