



Beef and Black Bean Stew

This wonderfully aromatic dish flavored with baharat spices has been adapted from a traditional Lebanese recipe made with lamb and Navy beans. The cinnamon, clove and peppery baharat mix also gives a wonderful rich flavour to beef stews. This recipe combines beef and baharat spices with the South American black bean (turtle bean) to give a hearty, wholesome stew. N.B. Don't confuse the dried black beans in this recipe for the salty black beans familiar in Chinese cooking.

Serves : 4
Preparation Time : 2-4 hours soaking time (optional - see method)
Cooking Time : 1 1/2 - 2 hours

Ingredients

8 oz / 225g dried black beans (turtle beans)
 1lb / 450g stewing beef, diced
 2 tbsp olive oil
 2 onions, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1 tin good quality whole tomatoes
 1 tbsp tomato paste
 1 tsp salt

Herbs & Spices

1/2 tsp Peppercorns Cracked Black
 4 tsp Baharat

Cooking Instructions

This recipe cold soaks the beans for 2-4 hours prior to cooking. You don't have to soak the beans, but the cooking time will need adjusting if you don't. Follow instructions on the bean packet.

Rinse the black beans in cold water, pick over for any stones or other debris and then place in a large bowl of cold water for 2-4 hours (or overnight if more convenient). At the same time as preparing your beans, rub 2 tsp of baharat spice mix and the black pepper into your diced beef and leave to dry marinate.

When ready to cook, heat the oil in a large casserole dish over a medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook gently until soft. Add the meat, scraping any marinade into the pot, and allow to brown. Tip in the tin of tomatoes, add the tomato paste, salt and the beans, stirring to mix. Add approximately 2 pints / 1.1 litres of water and bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cover and cook for 1 1/2 hours - 2 hours or until the beans and the meat are tender. Check regularly to see if more water needs to be added. Stir to prevent catching on the bottom of the pan.

Once the meat and the beans are tender, use a slotted spoon to remove a large spoonful of the beans to a bowl. Mash these beans with a fork or potato masher and return to the pot to thicken the sauce. Stir in well. Sprinkle in the remaining teaspoon of baharat spice mix. Check seasoning and allow to cook for a further 5 minutes before serving.

Serve with rice and vegetables of your choice.

This dish can be made in advance and reheated.