

Cooking with the Club

by Chef Robert Larios



Send Us Your Recipes!

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Slow and Delicious

Many of you have slow cookers at home that may be collecting dust and don't have a good use for it. I know this tends to happen to many of my friends and neighbors, but I have a great vegetarian chili recipe. This one is perhaps the most complex to make of any I have ever shared with you because of the number of ingredients it calls for, but it is well worth it.

It is almost unbelievable that all these robust flavors can be packed into the small space of a slow cooker, but it happens, and cooks around the world should thank the inventor for such an amazing kitchen contraption – at least this Chef does! For those who need extra protein in this recipe, feel free to incorporate your favorite meats to the chili.

Lastly, we have another delicious recipe from Catherine Hinkle, wife of Richard Hinkle, Airports. She tells me that her husband and teenager who love meats also love this vegetarian dish. Thank you for sharing, Catherine!

Catherine's Vegetarian Tofu Delight

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package (12 oz.) extra-firm tofu packed in water, drained
- 1 cup frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes*
- 1 package Spanish rice pilaf mix
- 1 1/4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup shredded Mexican cheese blend (4 oz.)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded lettuce
- 1 tomato chopped
- 4 green onions
- 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons cilantro



Cooking TIDBIT: When a recipe calls for canned diced tomatoes, like this one, buy canned whole ones and dice them if you would like higher-quality tomatoes. Producers dice only inferior tomatoes. But, if you are short on time, use the can of chopped tomatoes in puree like I did.

DIRECTIONS:

Catherine's Vegetarian Tofu Delight

Step 1:

Place drained tofu between two layers of paper towels; press gently to remove as much water as possible. Cut into one-half-inch cubes, set aside.

Step 2:

In a 12-inch nonstick skillet, mix the corn, diced tomatoes, rice mix and broth. Gently stir in tofu. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 12 to 14 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is tender.



Step 3:

Remove from heat and stir in cilantro. Sprinkle cheese over mixture, cover and let stand four to five minutes or until cheese is melted.

Step 4:

Top with lime juice, lettuce, chopped tomato and onions. You can also add avocado and sour cream if you wish, serve with either corn or flour tortillas. Yummy!



[A Cook's Dictionary]

Slow Cooker:

Also called a Crock Pot, the slow cooker is an electric "casserole" that cooks food with low, steady, moist heat. It's designed to cook food over a period of eight to 12 hours. These appliances range in size from one to six quarts. Slow cookers can cook a dish while you're at work, and they don't heat up the kitchen. On the minus side is that some vegetables (like celery) can become mushy before the other ingredients are done.

– From the *The New Food Lover's Companion*, Sharon Tyler Herbst, 1995, Barron's Educational Series.

Chef Larios' Slow Cooker Vegetarian Chili

INGREDIENTS:

Makes 8 to 10 servings

- 1 (14 ounce) can black beans
- 1 (14 ounce) can kidney beans, drained
- 1 (14 ounce) can garbanzo beans
- 1 (14 ounce) can chopped tomatoes in puree
- 1 (14 ounce) can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 onion, diced
- 1/2 green bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 1 jalapeno, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- Sea salt and fresh cracked pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 tablespoon dried tarragon
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon powder yellow mustard
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil



DIRECTIONS:

Chef Larios' Slow Cooker Vegetarian Chili

1



Have all your ingredients ready. Dice your red and green bell peppers, onion, jalapeno and celery. Mince the garlic cloves. Place them to the side and complete the measuring amounts for the spices. Set aside the bay leaves for later.

2



Place a pan on medium heat and add the extra virgin olive oil. Add all your diced ingredients into the pan and sauté for about three minutes. Add salt and pepper and then all of your spices. Let sauté and stir for about five to 10 minutes.

3



Take your sautéed ingredients from the pan and add it to the slow cooker. Also, this is when you add the canned beans, corn and tomatoes. Stir gently. Turn the heat of the Crock Pot up to high. Let cook for four to six hours.

4



Plate in a bowl and serve.

5



Enjoy!



Food Factoid:

"If hunger makes you irritable, better eat and be pleasant." – Sefer Hasidim