

Black Bean Stew

Feijoada

Feijoada is the national dish of Brazil, one in which each cook takes personal pride. It was originally created by slaves to make use of the leftover bits of meat that could go a long way with black beans. Even today, when unexpected guests arrive, there is a saying: "Add more water to the feijoada."

1. Place beans in a large heavy kettle or pot with cold water to cover by 2 inches, about 3 ½ quarts. Bring to a boil over moderate heat.
2. Add meat. Lower the heat and simmer, covered, for 3 hours, stirring occasionally.
3. In a small skillet, heat olive oil and sauté onions and garlic until onions are tender, about 5 minutes, stirring often. Stir into the bean mixture. Add bay leaf and parsley.
4. Simmer the mixture, covered, for 30 minutes, or until the sauce has become thick and creamy. (Although the meats used to flavor the beans are usually discarded at this point having given up most of their flavor to the sauce, they may be cubed and returned to the pot.)
5. Season with salt and pepper. Serve over rice, accompanied by collard greens, *Farofa* (page 197), and sliced oranges. This dish tastes best when refrigerated overnight and reheated before serving.

Note: As an alternative to soaking beans overnight, cover dried beans with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and let stand 1 hour. Drain and use fresh water to cook according to recipe.

**Available at Brazilian food markets.*

servings: 12

4 cups dried black beans, rinsed, picked over, soaked overnight in water, and drained

1 pound salted dried beef (*carne seca*),* rinsed, soaked overnight in water and drained, or smoked ham, smoked pork, sausage, or ham hocks

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 medium onions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 large bay leaf

Bunch of fresh parsley, chopped (about 1 cup)

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste