

Caldo de Carnitas y Frijoles Negros

Ingredients

Carnitas consommé	2 cups	Ground cumin	1 tsp.
Water	3 cups	Mexican oregano	1 tsp.
Shredded carnitas meat	1½ cups	Bay leaves	2
Black beans	2 (15 oz.) cans	Kosher salt	1 tsp.
Rotel diced tomatoes	1 (10 oz.) can	Black pepper	½ tsp.
Yellow onion, medium	1	Fresh cilantro	½ cup
Garlic cloves	4	Lime juice	3 Tbsp.
Celery stalks	2	Lime wedges	for serving
Carrots, medium	2		
Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.		

Directions

Dice **onion**, **celery**, and **carrots** into ¼-inch pieces — Mince **garlic** — Drain and rinse **black beans** — Chop **cilantro** — Juice **limes** — Warm **carnitas meat** if refrigerated

1. Heat **vegetable oil** in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add diced **onion**, **celery**, and **carrots**. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften, about *8-10 minutes*.
2. Add minced **garlic**, **cumin**, and **Mexican oregano**. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about *1 minute*.
3. Add **Rotel tomatoes** with their juice and cook for *3-4 minutes*, allowing some liquid to evaporate and flavors to concentrate.
4. Pour in **carnitas consommé** and **water**. Add **bay leaves**, **salt**, and **black pepper**. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for *15 minutes*.
5. Add **black beans** and **carnitas meat**. Simmer for additional *10-15 minutes* until vegetables are tender and flavors are well integrated.
6. Remove **bay leaves**. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional **salt** and **pepper** as needed.
7. Remove from heat and stir in **lime juice** and half of the chopped **cilantro**.
8. Serve hot, garnished with remaining **cilantro** and **lime wedges** on the side.

Equipment Required

- Large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot (6-quart capacity)
- Sharp chef's knife
- Large cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Can opener
- Colander for draining beans
- Ladle for serving
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Bring **carnitas consommé** to room temperature if refrigerated
- Warm **carnitas meat** slightly if cold from refrigeration
- Dice all vegetables to uniform ¼-inch pieces for even cooking
- Have all spices measured and ready before starting
- Open and drain **black bean** cans just before use

Ingredient Tips

- Use **Mexican oregano** rather than Mediterranean for authentic flavor profile
- **Rotel** provides perfect heat balance - avoid substituting with plain diced tomatoes
- Rinse **black beans** thoroughly to remove excess sodium and starch
- If **carnitas consommé** is very gelatinous, it will thin perfectly when heated
- Fresh **lime juice** is essential - bottled juice lacks the brightness needed

Preparation Tips

- Don't rush the vegetable sautéing - proper softening builds flavor foundation
- Bloom spices in oil for maximum potency before adding liquid
- Add **lime juice** and **cilantro** off heat to preserve bright flavors
- Taste soup before final seasoning - **consommé** saltiness varies
- If soup seems too thick, add water; if too thin, simmer uncovered longer

Make Ahead & Storage

- Soup improves in flavor after *24 hours* in refrigerator
- Store up to *4 days* refrigerated or *3 months* frozen
- Add **lime juice** and fresh **cilantro** only when reheating to serve
- May need additional water when reheating as beans absorb liquid
- Freeze in individual portions for easy weeknight meals

Serving Suggestions

- Garnish with diced white onion, crumbled **queso fresco**, or **Mexican crema**
- Serve with warm corn tortillas or crusty bread
- Add diced **avocado** just before serving for richness
- Accompany with pickled jalapeños for those wanting extra heat
- Makes excellent leftover lunch - flavors continue to develop
- Consider serving with Mexican rice as a more substantial meal