



... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Mixed Bean Chicken Chili

Many health and wellness professionals promote the habit of shopping the perimeter of the grocery store as a strategy to improve the nutrient quality of the diet. This is because, in most stores, fresh produce, lean meats, eggs, and dairy are located on the perimeter, while the more processed, high sodium and high sugar foods are located in the middle of the store. But if you skip the middle, you're missing out on many wholesome, nutrient rich, economical and tasty foods, like canned legumes/beans. These gems can cut down on the burden of preparing family meals, and when paired with items from the perimeter of the store, can result in a healthy eating pattern.

Canned beans/legumes such as kidney, pinto, navy, black, lentils, etc. are available at a moment's notice and they are healthy additions to any of your meals. In addition, because they are from plants, they usually don't have saturated fat (the fat known to cause heart disease), and are an inexpensive source of protein, especially when compared to fresh meat. Because beans/legumes are low in fat and rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, consuming them may result in multiple health benefits such as lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels and also reducing the risk of cancer. As a result, many health professionals recommend adults aim to consume at least 3 cups of beans/legumes per week to promote and maintain optimal health.

This meal features a quick twist on traditional chili by using a variety of canned beans and chicken. Try this recipe and then the next time you make a "chili," experiment even further by adding vegetables, and different spices/herbs and other lean meats.

Try some of the following tips to include beans in your diet:

- Mix black beans with your lean meat for taco/burrito night.
- Top salads with chick peas, kidney, navy or pinto beans.
- Add a can of legumes to your favorite soup recipe or canned soup to make it more hearty.
- Snack on raw vegetables and hummus.
- Top nachos with beans, instead of meat.
- Make a big pot of chili, serve it for dinner and then use the leftovers to top baked potatoes.



Directions:

- 1) Dice one medium onion and then cut 1 lb. of boneless, skinless chicken breast into bite sized chunks.
- 2) In a large cooking pan (Dutch oven), over medium heat, add the oil, chicken and onion. Cook until the onions begin to soften. Then add 28-30 oz. of low sodium chicken broth.
- 3) Add to the pan; 2 ½ tsp. of cumin, 1 tsp. of garlic powder, ½ tsp. of black pepper and 1 can of chopped green chilies. Bring the mixture to a boil.
- 4) Pour 3 cans (about 14 oz. each) of your desired variety of beans (pinto, navy, northern and/or cannellini) into a colander that is placed in the sink to drain. (Try 1 can each of cannellini, navy, and pinto.)
- 5) Gently rinse the beans in cold water and drain well.
- 6) Add 2/3 of the beans to the pot and turn the heat to medium, so the mixture simmers. Cover.
- 7) Mash the remaining 1/3 of the beans with a fork until they resemble the consistency of mashed potatoes.

Serves: 8

- 8) Add the mashed beans to the pan and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for about 20 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and tender. Stir occasionally to prevent burning.
- 9) Divide ½ the chili between 4 bowls and top each bowl with a sprinkle of shredded, cheddar cheese. Serve this chili alongside a garden salad or a bowl of mixed fruit.

Notes:

To adapt this recipe for a slow cooker, add the diced chicken, onions and broth directly to the slow cooker (skip step 2); then, follow steps 3-6. Place reserved beans in the refrigerator. Set the cooker on low for 6-7 hours or high for 3-4 hours. During the last 30 minutes, complete steps 7-8.

For more heat, add cayenne pepper and/or top each bowl with a whole green chile.

For added flavor, consider adding 1-2 tsp. of dried oregano.

Freeze the remaining half of the chili in individual containers for a quick on the go meal or for hearty office lunch.

DISCLAIMER: YOU MAY USE ANY LIKE PRODUCTS OF ANY BRAND IN MAKING THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL. THE PICTURES HERE ARE NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF THESE PRODUCTS.

FOR ADDITIONAL MEAL SOLUTIONS, PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#) OR VISIT [COMMISSARIES.COM/HEALTHY-LIVING/HEALTHY-EATS.CFM](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living/healthy-eats.cfm).