

THE PINTO EPIPHANY

You know? Every so often you have an epiphany. This week, I had at least two. In this case it was with pinto beans. So, I had been mucking around with dried beans (see “OLD MAN's Refried Beans” for one example) and I had learned that acid is bad for beans before a certain point. I learned THAT lesson REALLY well, but at some point, I said, “well, what about Sous Vide?” Turns out, it works freaking fantastic!

I am still working on this one, so let's make sure we consider it a work on progress. That notwithstanding, FREAKIN GREAT BEANS!!!

2021-08-14 (Saturday): Well, I made this the other day, and I decided to go back to the original recipe BUT with typical stove top cooking (no more Sous Vide). Why? Well, I wound up waiting too long to make this with Sous Vide and wound up cooking it on the stove without the caramelized onions. It was FANTASTIC! I also have another one I am working on, so stay tuned!

INGREDIENTS

| Qty. | Unit | Item |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| AR | ----- | Distilled Water |
| 1 | 1lb bag | Dried Pinto Beans |
| 9.2 | oz | Shallots |
| 6 | Cups | Beef Broth with No Salt Added |
| 3 | ----- | Large Cloves Garlic |
| 2 | ----- | Fresh Bay Leaves |
| 4 | ----- | Small Sprigs Fresh Rosemary |
| 4 | ----- | Small Sprigs Fresh Thyme |
| 1 | TSP | Ground Cumin |
| 1 | TSP | Mexican Oregano |
| 1 | TSP | Black Pepper Corns |
| 1 | 2 oz Can | Anchovies |
| 2 | ----- | Smoked Ham Hocks |
| AR | ----- | Kosher Salt |
| 1 | TSP | Accent |

I think you'll need at least 1 gallon, but get two just to make sure. Don't worry, it keeps!

Yes, the bay leaves need to be fresh; it makes a world of difference. Check the produce section of your grocery store where the other fresh herbs are sold

If you can't find Mexican oregano, regular ol' oregano should work

The ham hocks are the key to this whole thing. NO SUBSTITUTIONS!!!

I am going by weight on the shallots because I can't always find the jumbo ones. The last time I got jumbos, it worked out to about 4.6 oz per shallot

SPECIAL TOOLS

- NONE!!!

PREPARATION

NIGHT BEFORE

- 1) Sort through the beans and remove any sticks, stones, dirt, foreign debris, etc
- 2) Rinse the beans through a strainer or colander
- 3) Put beans in a pot and cover with DISTILLED water to AT LEAST 3 times the height of the beans [i, ii]
- 4) Cover the pot and let sit overnight in a coolish spot [iii, iv]

DAY OF

- 1) Drain the beans through a colander. Rinse and let drain
- 2) Place the ham hocks in a large pot [v]
- 3) Rinse your shallots!
- 4) Slice off the root and tip ends
- 5) Remove the paper and outer layer if it is soft / rubbery / unappealing
- 6) Small dice the shallots and add to the pot
- 7) Mince the garlic and add to the pot
- 8) Add the bay leaves, fresh rosemary, and fresh thyme to the pot
- 9) Sprinkle in ground cumin, Mexican oregano, and black pepper corns
- 10) Add the anchovies to the pot one at a time. Don't worry about patting off excess oil, but don't dump in ALL the oil
- 11) Add 6 cups of beef broth and 2 cups of distilled water
- 12) Heat the water on high until it boils
- 13) Reduce heat to a high simmer / low boil and cook for 1 hour, gently stirring occasionally
- 14) After 1 hour, reduce heat to a just bare simmer and cook for another hour, gently stirring occasionally and manipulating the ham hocks so that the eventually break apart
- 15) Cook a bit longer if you would like it reduced further
- 16) Remove from heat
- 17) Remove the ham hock bones and skins, but leave in any meat
- 18) Fish out the bay leaves, thyme and rosemary sprigs
- 19) Stir in the accent
- 20) Salt to taste
- 21) Cover until you are ready to serve
- 22) ENJOY!!!

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Like I said earlier, still a work in progress, but has fantastic potential. It keeps great too! If you get to the end of the Sous Vide cooking and it is too late to continue on, stick the bags o beans in a bowl and put in the fridge. Reheat in an appropriately sized pot on low and voila! And hey! If you want re-fried beans, heat in a fry pan and mash with a potato masher. This will also work great with rice. So much potential!

2021-08-14 (Saturday): Tasty TASTY!!! I just had some for lunch mixed with leftover rice! Later I am going to take some of this batch and freeze it.

NOTES

- i. Why distilled water? Well, in my case, my water is pretty acidic and, as I have recently learned, acid prevents beans from softening and makes them take longer to cook.
- ii. Check the beans occasionally. They will expand and if it looks like they are going to come out of the water, add a bit more water
- iii. This may be a bit controversial. I have seen it said that you should soak beans for no longer than 6 – 8 hours. Something about starting to sprout or making the skins harder after a while. I dunno. 6 – 8 hours kind of puts it at a weird time in regards to fitting in everything else and overnight seemed to work for me
- iv. If it is too warm, they might start to ferment which, long story short, could impede cooking
- v. My 7 quart pot was PERFECT

PICTURES
