

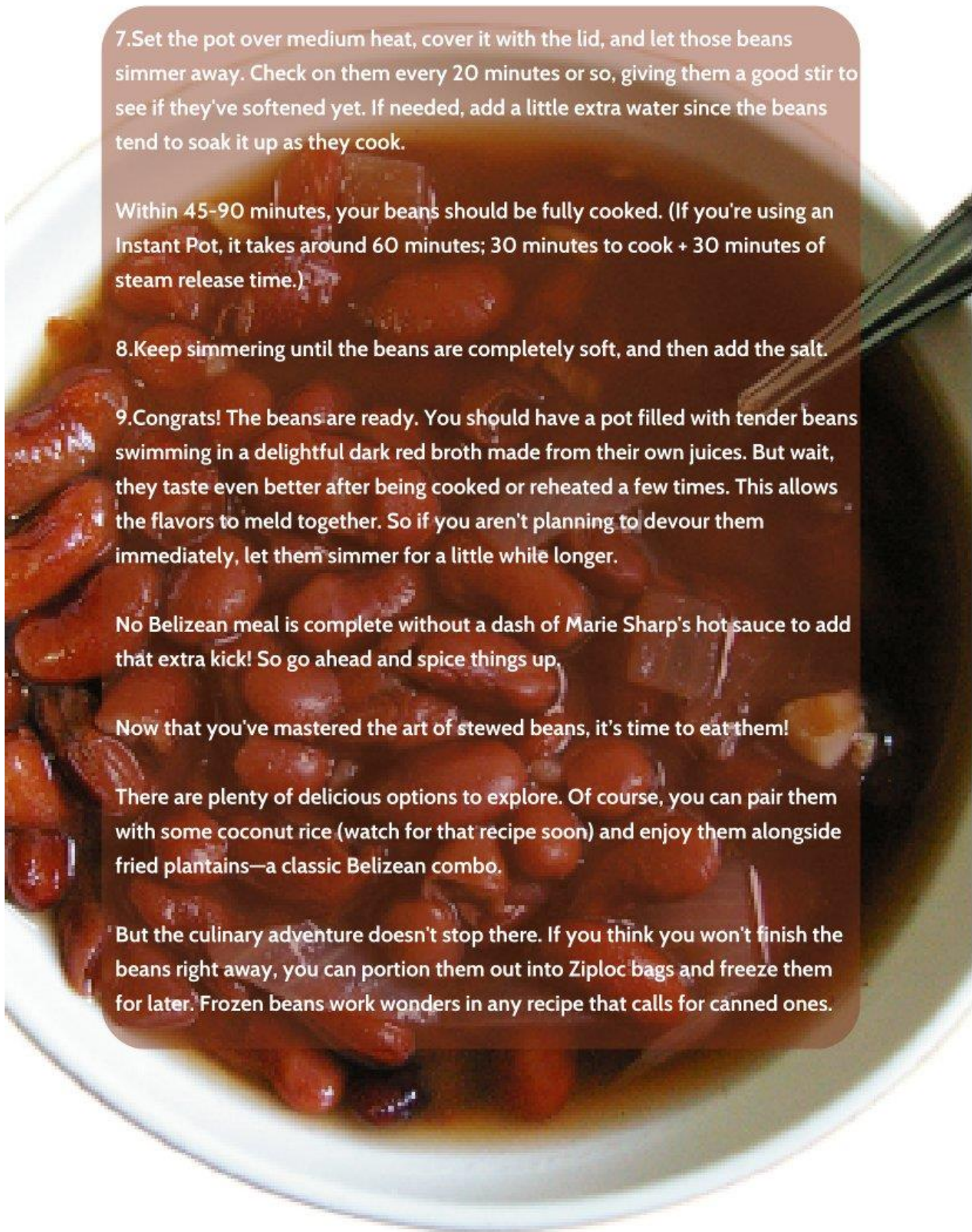
Stew Beans

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups dried Red Kidney Beans
- Water
- ½ tsp Ground Cumin
- 1 tsp Dried Oregano
- 2 Bay Leaves
- ½ tsp Black Pepper
- 1 large Onion
- 6 cloves of Garlic
- 1 tsp Recado*
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1 Tbsp coconut oil

LET'S GET COOKING!

1. Start by rinsing the beans and removing any debris.
2. Dump those beautiful beans into a large pot and add water. Fill the pot with water, aiming for about twice the volume of the beans.
3. Cover the pot with a lid and let the beans soak for at least 5 hours (or up to 12 hours) until they become leathery and flexible. If you're using an Instant Pot, no need to soak the beans first.
4. After soaking, add more water to the pot, ensuring there are at least 2 inches of water above the level of the beans.
5. Dice the onions & chop the garlic cloves into 2-3 pieces each (do Not mince the garlic)
6. Time to introduce the flavorful squad! Add the chopped onion, garlic, bay leaf, coconut oil [do Not substitute with coconut milk], and all the spices—EXCEPT the salt. [Adding salt now will toughen the skin of the beans.]

A top-down view of a white ceramic bowl filled with dark red, stewed beans. The beans are plump and glistening with a thick, dark red broth. A pair of silver chopsticks is visible on the right side of the bowl, resting on the beans. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

7. Set the pot over medium heat, cover it with the lid, and let those beans simmer away. Check on them every 20 minutes or so, giving them a good stir to see if they've softened yet. If needed, add a little extra water since the beans tend to soak it up as they cook.

Within 45-90 minutes, your beans should be fully cooked. (If you're using an Instant Pot, it takes around 60 minutes; 30 minutes to cook + 30 minutes of steam release time.)

8. Keep simmering until the beans are completely soft, and then add the salt.

9. Congrats! The beans are ready. You should have a pot filled with tender beans swimming in a delightful dark red broth made from their own juices. But wait, they taste even better after being cooked or reheated a few times. This allows the flavors to meld together. So if you aren't planning to devour them immediately, let them simmer for a little while longer.

No Belizean meal is complete without a dash of Marie Sharp's hot sauce to add that extra kick! So go ahead and spice things up.

Now that you've mastered the art of stewed beans, it's time to eat them!

There are plenty of delicious options to explore. Of course, you can pair them with some coconut rice (watch for that recipe soon) and enjoy them alongside fried plantains—a classic Belizean combo.

But the culinary adventure doesn't stop there. If you think you won't finish the beans right away, you can portion them out into Ziploc bags and freeze them for later. Frozen beans work wonders in any recipe that calls for canned ones.



Here are a few ideas to tantalize your taste buds:

- Whip up some authentic homemade refried beans! It's the perfect way to transform these beans into a delightful side dish.
- Get your chili game on! Stew beans can be a fantastic base for a flavorful chili that will warm your soul.
- Tacos or Burritos: Grab some soft tortillas and fill them up with stew beans, shredded cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, and your favorite toppings. It's a delightful twist on traditional tacos or burritos.
- Bean Dip: Blend or mash the stew beans to create a creamy bean dip. Add some spices, lime juice, and a sprinkle of cheese on top. Serve it with tortilla chips or veggie sticks for a fantastic appetizer.
- Bean Soup: Use the stew beans as a base for a hearty bean soup. Add some diced vegetables, savory broth, and your choice of meat (like diced ham or sausage) for a comforting and nutritious meal.
- Bean Salad: Mix the stew beans with fresh vegetables like bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, red onions, and cilantro. Drizzle with a zesty dressing made from lime juice, olive oil, and a touch of cumin. It's a refreshing and protein-packed salad.
- Bean and Rice Casserole: Combine the stew beans with cooked rice, sautéed onions, bell peppers, and your choice of spices. Top it with cheese and bake until bubbly and golden. It's a wholesome and satisfying one-pot meal.
- Bean and Vegetable Stir-Fry: Stir-fry your favorite vegetables, like bell peppers, zucchini, and snap peas, then add the stew beans for a protein boost.
- Bean Stuffed Peppers: Scoop out bell peppers, stuff them with a mixture of stew beans, cooked rice, diced tomatoes, and cheese. Bake until the peppers are tender, and the filling is hot and bubbly.
- Bean and Avocado Salad: Combine cold stew beans with diced avocado, corn kernels, red onions, and fresh cilantro. Drizzle with a tangy dressing made from lime juice, olive oil, and a touch of honey. It's a vibrant and healthy salad bursting with flavors.