

## **Spicy Black Bean and Sausage Soup with Roasted Garlic**

8 ounces dried black beans, soaked overnight (or sub two cans)  
6 cloves garlic, unpeeled, tips removed  
Olive oil for garlic  
1 tablespoon bacon grease or olive oil  
1/2 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup chopped carrot  
4 ounces ground spicy Italian sausage  
1 chipotle in Adobo sauce, minced plus one tablespoon of the sauce  
1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
4 cups ham or chicken stock  
1 14.5 ounce can tomatoes with liquid (I used my homemade canned tomatoes)  
1 tablespoon dry sherry or apple cider vinegar  
Salt, to taste  
Lime wedges, cilantro, sour cream, for garnish

Drain and rinse beans (dried or canned) and set aside. Nestle cloves of garlic cut tips up in aluminum foil and drizzle olive oil over top. Wrap tightly and place in 350-degree toaster oven (or oven) for 25 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Meanwhile, heat the tablespoon bacon grease or olive oil in a Dutch oven or soup pot over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots and ground sausage, stirring until sausage is cooked through. Drain any grease, if necessary. Stir in the chipotle and sauce, smoked paprika, cumin, and cayenne pepper until combined and fragrant.

Pour in the stock, then squeeze the cloves of roasted garlic out of their skins into the soup. Now add the beans. Bring up to a boil, then turn down and simmer until the beans are cooked through. For dried beans, this could take an hour or more depending on how old the beans are. Canned beans are ready when heated through.

Puree the tomatoes with liquid in a container using an immersion blender stick, or a blender or food processor. (I used my new Cuisinart stick!) Once the beans are tender, pour in the tomatoes and sherry or vinegar. Taste for salt, and add if necessary.

Puree about half the soup using an immersion stick, or add to blender or food processor in batches. I like mine a bit chunky. (Return blended soup to pot, if necessary). Simmer soup for about 20 minutes more to let the flavors meld. Once soup has warmed through again, serve immediately and pass with lime wedges, cilantro, and sour cream.