

Black Bean and Tomato Soup

Serves 4.

1 / 2 cup black turtle beans, soaked overnight*

*(BPA-free canned beans may be used to shorten cooking time)

3 ripe plum tomatoes

1 small red onion, unpeeled

4 cloves of garlic, unpeeled

1 tbsp olive oil

2-3 sprigs fresh thyme (or $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dried)

1 / 2 tsp black peppercorns

1 tsp coriander seeds

1 / 2 tsp cumin seeds

1 quart vegetable or chicken broth (for ex. Harvest Sun brand)

To garnish:

2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander

1 / 2 avocado, cubed and tossed in lime juice

1 small fresh red chili seeded and finely sliced (optional)

lime segments

Drain the soaking beans, rinsing well. Place them in a saucepan with enough water to cover them by at least 2 inches. Bring to a vigorous boil and cook for 20 minutes. Once tender (mashable with a fork), drain and rinse.

Meanwhile, put the tomatoes, onion and garlic on a foil-lined baking tray under a preheated hot broiler (e.g., a toaster oven). Broil, turning frequently for 10-12 minutes, until charred all over. After a 5-10 minute cooling period, peel the onion and garlic. Then, cut the onion into chunks. Transfer to a mini-food processor, adding the tomatoes, and blend until smooth. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet, on medium heat.

Meanwhile, using a mortar and pestle, crush the peppercorns, coriander and cumin seeds until roughly powdered. Add the thyme and the spice mixture to the oil, and fry for about 30 seconds to flavour the oil. Stir in the vegetable puree and gently fry for a few minutes.

Add the drained beans and the broth. Bring to a gentle boil, then simmer over medium heat for 30 minutes until the beans are very soft (like mashed potato when crushed with a fork).

Remove the thyme sprigs, then blend about half the beans in a food processor. Return this puree to the pan, add salt to taste, and reheat gently for 5-10 minutes.

Sprinkle with the coriander herb and top with avocado and chili (if using). Serve with lime segments to squeeze over the soup.

from *A Harvest of Healing Foods* by McFadden and Zelman