

CARIBBEAN-INSPIRED CHICKEN AND BLACK BEAN STEW

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On one of my trips to the Caribbean, I learned that, despite hot temperatures, spicy stews are served regularly at any time of year. They are flavorful, comforting, and welcoming like a hug.

There are many variations of chicken stew in the Caribbean with thyme, allspice, hot peppers, sugar, and some form of tomatoes being common ingredients. This version incorporates a few modern flavor-building ingredients to lower the salt content and some that are more readily available in grocery stores.

Serve this thick and flavorful stew over a scoop of any favorite whole grain, such as brown rice, and perhaps a leafy green salad on the side. Then sit back and allow your tastebuds to transport you to tropical locales.

Vegetarian/Vegan Version: In place of the chicken, use either 1 cup of cooked chickpeas or small diced extra-firm tofu.

- Toss the cooked chickpeas with the spices, and add them to the stew with the black beans.
- Press as much liquid out of the tofu as possible, dice, toss with the spices, and brown in the pan before sauteing the vegetables. Remove the tofu from the pan and set aside while sautéing the vegetables. Add the sauteed tofu back into the stew with the black beans.

Makes: 6 servings (1 cup serving size)

INGREDIENTS

2 teaspoons sweet curry powder
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or 1/2 teaspoon for a spicier stew)
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
8 - 10 ounces diced chicken breast or thigh meat (skinless, boneless)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup small diced onion (about 1 small onion)
1/2 cup small diced carrot
2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes and juices (low or no salt added)
1/3 cup pineapple juice (no added sugar)
1 tablespoon aged balsamic vinegar
1/2 teaspoon molasses
1 can (15 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained (low or no salt added)
Cooked whole grain such as brown rice or brown basmati rice

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the whole grain according to package directions. While the whole grain cooks, prepare the stew.
2. Combine the curry, thyme, allspice, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Add the diced chicken, and stir to coat well.
3. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan or Dutch oven over medium heat.
 - Add the onion and carrot, and sauté until tender and lightly browned, about 5 - 8 minutes.
 - Add the garlic and sauté 30 seconds more.
 - Add the seasoned chicken to the pan and sauté for 3 – 4 minutes.
 - Stir in the tomatoes with their juices, pineapple juice, balsamic, molasses, and black beans. Bring to a gentle simmer.
 - Cover, reduce heat to a low simmer, and cook for approximately 10 minutes until the chicken is tender and cooked through. Stir occasionally.
4. Serve over a scoop of cooked whole grain.