

## Super Vegan Chili with "meat"



For years I have made my vegetarian chili without meat. Since my older son, Sam, has been home (Covid 19 casualty, but nice for us - a last hurrah with him under our roof), our vegetarian cooking has incorporated more plant-based protein. While he is not a vegetarian, he appreciates the benefits of the lifestyle and probably eats an 80% plant-based diet. We have explored many of the tofu options out there, including organic tofu crumbles that can be substituted in recipes for ground meat. I adapted the following recipe from my own and several others including one from the website

<https://itdoesnttastelikechicken.com> in which they

claim their recipe won in a non-vegan chili cook off contest (including ones with meat). Their flavoring of the "meat" really adds something. I think this will appeal to vegans and meat eaters alike.

### For the Chili:

- 2 tablespoon Olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 6-8 cloves of garlic minced
- 2 28 oz cans of diced tomatoes
- 2 cups salsa
- 6 cups cooked or canned mixed beans-kidney, pinto, black, garbanzo all work well, use what you have.
- 2 Cups water
- 4 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoon paprika
- 2-3 Dried red chilis
- 2 tablespoon maple syrup
- Chopped scallions
- Vegan (or not) sour cream and cheese (optional)

### For the "meat":

- Bag of tofu crumbles (10-12 oz) or a block of extra firm tofu
- 2 tablespoon mirin (or soy) sauce
- 4 tablespoon nutritional yeast
- 2 tablespoon olive oil

In a large pot heat the 2 T of olive oil to medium heat and sauté the onions and garlic cooking until the onions are soft and translucent and starting to brown. Add the tomatoes, salsa, beans, water, whole dried chilis and all the spices and syrup.

Bring to a boil and reduce to simmer. After simmering for about 15 minutes, if using soaked dried beans, I transfer to a crock pot and let cook for a couple of hours. If using canned beans simmer for up to an hour in regular pot. If the chili gets dry, add more water or some vegetable broth.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Oil a baking sheet or line with parchment.

For the "meat": put the defrosted crumbles into a large bowl. If using a block, drain it and break it up and crumble it into bowl with your fingers. In a separate small bowl whisk together the 2 T of olive oil, soy or mirin and nutritional yeast. Pour over the tofu in the large bowl and coat all the crumbles.

Spread the crumbles onto the baking pan. Bake for 30-40 minutes until brown. Throughout stir it so it browns all over. The edge pieces may be darker, just be careful not to burn.

When your chili is simmered fully and the beans are cooked through, add the tofu crumbles to the pot and stir them in, cook for another 5-10 minutes. Serve with the chopped scallions and other optional toppings.

#### Notes:

- Salsa (I use homemade but store bought fresh would work fine, you could also use jarred salsa or more tomatoes)
- Beans-I prefer to use dried which I soak overnight or quick soak and then add to the recipe. They hold their shape better. If you used canned, just be careful not to overcook, perhaps cook the sauce longer before adding the beans.
- If you prefer, you could substitute 3 Tablespoons of chili powder for the cayenne, red pepper flake, dried chilis and some of the paprika.