

You will need: a medium Dutch oven or pot with a tightfitting lid, a colander or strainer, one onion, one carrot, one bell pepper, one zucchini, two cloves of garlic, vegetable oil, salt and pepper, two 15-ounce cans of beans (any kind), ground cumin, chili powder, one 28-ounce can of chopped tomatoes, optional garnishes: chopped cilantro, quartered pieces of lime, shredded cheese, sour cream

Step
1

Cut **all the veggies** except the garlic into little pieces. Finely chop the garlic.

Step
2

Coat the bottom of the pot with **oil**. Heat the pot over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers, then **add the onions, carrots, and garlic** and season with salt and pepper. Cook until the onions are soft.

Step
3

Drain the beans in the colander or strainer and **rinse**. Set aside.

Step
4

When the onions are soft, **add the remaining vegetables** to the pot and season again with salt and pepper. Add one heaping spoonful of **cumin** and a couple of spoonfuls of **chili powder**. Cook, stirring, until the vegetables are **just starting to get tender** (about 10 minutes).

*From the store to the kitchen to the table: We outline the steps that get you from raw ingredients to your dinner tonight, free of measurements and complicated techniques. It's a method you'll remember and whip out whenever you like. It is the most basic way to make the thing you're making.

Step
5



Add the **tomatoes** and their juices to the pot, along with the **rinsed beans**.

Step
6



Fill one bean can with **water** and add it to the chili. Bring everything to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium low and cover the pot. Gently simmer until the **veggies are soft** and the flavors have melded (about 10 minutes). Taste the chili and add more salt and pepper if necessary.

Step
7



Serve and **garnish** as desired.

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Illustrations by Bill Russell. Find this online at www.chow.com/stories/11626.