

Salt and Serenity

Chicken Cashew Chili

Serves 6

Chile can be made 2 days ahead. Cool completely, uncovered, then cover tightly and refrigerate.

4-5 dried chiles (such as Ancho, New Mexico or Guajillo)
1/3 cup salted cashews
1 ½ cups chicken broth
1 whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces, skin removed
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
4 cloves garlic, finely minced
1 tablespoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ancho chili powder
½ teaspoon chipotle chile powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 28 ounce can Italian plum tomatoes
½ ounce bittersweet dark chocolate (not unsweetened)
1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 can white kidney beans, rinsed and drained
½ cup salted cashews

1. Heat a small heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot and toast chiles, one at a time, pressing down with tongs for a few seconds on each side to make more pliable. Wearing rubber gloves, seed and de-vein chiles. Put chiles in a medium heatproof bowl and cover with boiling water. Let sit to soften for about 20 minutes. Remove chiles from hot water and in a blender or food processor, puree chiles with 1/3 cup cashews and the chicken stock until smooth.
2. In a large heavy saucepan, heat olive oil until hot. Cook onion and garlic, stirring until softened. Add cumin, chili powder and salt and stir for about 1 minute.
3. Add chicken to saucepan and stir to coat with the onion mixture. Stir in chile puree and canned tomatoes with juice. Cover pan and simmer, stirring occasionally to avoid sticking, for about 40 minutes or until chicken legs are cooked through.

4. Remove pan from heat and transfer chicken to a bowl. Stir chocolate and drained beans into chili sauce. Let chicken cool slightly and then remove meat, discarding skin and bones. Shred meat using two forks or your hands. Add shredded chicken to the pan. Reheat chili over moderate heat. Sprinkle with second quantity of cashews just before serving.