

Frijoles Refritos

Authentic Mexican Refried Beans, and Beyond

Smoky Pork Broth
Rich Vegetable Broth
Pinto Bean Soup
Refried Beans
Tostados



Pinto beans are very versatile.

Let me tell you a secret about dried beans; they are bland and tasteless, but also cheap and very nutritious, which makes them a great addition to your weekly meal planning. I want

to introduce you to the popular and versatile pinto bean, which should be a staple in every kitchen; they're the best choice for Frijoles Refritos, the subject of this recipe booklet. Pinto beans are beige and splashed with colorful reddish brown splotches. Their name "pinto," means "painted" in Spanish. I'm going to show you how to use the pressure cooker as a precooker to first cook the beans -- which makes a great bean soup, but I'm not going to stop there! -- I'm going to use the beans in many other recipes.

Pinto beans are mild tasting, starchy and have a smooth, creamy consistency that makes them the perfect choice for mashed Frijoles Refritos. Now, making a delicious

pot of Frijoles Refritos, or Well Fried Beans, from scratch, is a three-step process. The secret to making the best pot of beans is using a well-seasoned and richly flavored broth as the base that will flavor the bland and tasteless beans as they cook. The broth can either be meat or vegetables based, and I recommend using either the meat or vegetable version of the [Best Bean Broth](#) recipe from my cookbook (**Miss Vickie's BIG BOOK of Pressure Cooker Recipes**).



STEP ONE - THE BROTH



Dried Pinto Beans

Start by washing and sorting about 2 cups of dried pinto beans and then set them aside to soak them for at least 4 hours. While the beans are soaking, let's prepare the broth. Whether you'll be using a meat or veggie broth, we'll begin with lots of aromatic vegetables and fragrant herbs to give the beans a deep, well-rounded flavor and a wonderful aroma. A food processor is a really useful thing to have for this kind of prep work as it really cuts the effort and time in half, but if you don't have one, use a sharp knife to roughly chop, chop, chop all those veggies.

The Mexican Ingredients



Onions, cilantro, tomatillos, chili and jalapeño peppers, tomatillos and garlic.

For our Mexican inspired dish of Frijoles Refritos, I'm going to chop up plenty of vegetables with a Mexican flair. I used a couple of chopped

onions, smashed 3-4 plump garlic cloves, a bunch of coarsely chopped cilantro, and chop two mild Mexican chile peppers such as poblano, pasilla or Anaheim, plus 1 fresh jalapeno pepper. Be sure to seed the peppers and remove the inner veins, as that's where the fire is stored. I'm also going to add about 4-5 tomatillos; peel off the papery skin first. I want these veggies chopped so they will disintegrate in the broth and release every bit of their flavor into my beans.

The Fragrant Herbs - You'll want to add some complimentary herbs and spices to season your broth. I use 2 tablespoons of mixed thyme, marjoram and oregano, or use whatever combination works for you. De rigeur for any Mexican dish is a generous amount of ground cumin (I use a heaping teaspoon) and enough chili powder to spice things up without adding too much heat, so suit your tastes accordingly. Tie up a couple of bay leaves and about 10 whole peppercorns in a piece of cheesecloth to make it easy to fish it out. No salt and no acids like vinegar, tomatoes, citrus, or pickling juice yet, as they will close the teeny hole in the beans, making it harder for them to take up liquid and get soft and flavorful.

Next, heat a reasonable amount of oil over a medium-high heat in your pressure cooker, and when it is very hot, stir in your onions so that they are well coated with the oil and sauté, turning then from time to time. Do this until the onions begin to get soft and clear, and slightly browned, but don't let them burn because that will make them bitter. Next, push the onions to the side, add all the herbs and seasonings, stirring as they pop, sizzle, and begin to release their fragrant oils... smell the aroma? That's flavor in the making! Pour in a cup of liquid to deglaze the pot, scraping up all those crusty, brown bits from the bottom. the



THE DECISION - VEGETABLE OR MEAT BROTH?



For the Rich Vegetable Broth - You'll need 8 cups of washed, **mixed vegetables** such as carrots, celery, leeks, squash, sweet potatoes or yams, parsnips, rutabagas, spinach stems, asparagus ends, broccoli stalks, corncobs and even lettuce, which only need to be cut in large size pieces. Don't use regular potatoes because of their starchiness, also no beets unless you like magenta colored broth. No bitter veggies like turnips, eggplants, collards and mustard greens. Avoid all the strong tasting veggies from the cabbage family too, as they will overpower the broth.

Put all the **Mexican Ingredients** and the **Fragrant Herbs** and spices from above, along with the **mixed vegetables**, in the pressure cooker. Add enough water, or even better, a combination of water plus 2 cups of mixed flavoring liquids such as wine, beer and coffee, to cover all the ingredients by 2 inches. Lock the lid in place. Bring to 15psi over high heat, immediately reduce the heat to the lowest possible setting to stabilize and maintain that pressure. Cook 15 minutes. Remove from heat and use the natural release method before opening the lid. Pour the broth through a fine mesh strainer and discard all the vegetable matter as it is little more than tasteless lumps of fiber now, having given up everything for the broth.

For the Smoky Meat Broth -



Smoked Pork Neck Bones provide flavor and a richer tasting broth.

Next, we'll add some extremely flavorful -- but very tough -- smoked meat with a higher percentage of bones than meat. Choose from a couple of ham hocks, some smoked neck bones, smoked turkey legs or wings, or a leftover hambone, or mix them up. Place the meaty bones in the pressure cooker along with the **Mexican Ingredients** and the **Fragrant Herbs** from above. Add enough water, or even better, a combination of water plus 2 cups of mixed flavoring liquids such as wine, beer and coffee, to cover all the ingredients by 2 inches.

Lock the lid in place. Lock the lid in place. Bring to 15psi over high heat, immediately reduce the heat to the lowest possible setting to stabilize and maintain that pressure. Cook 40 minutes. Remove from heat and use the natural release method before opening the lid. Use a slotted spoon to remove all the meat and bones and spread them out on a cookie sheet to cool. Pick the meat from the bones and toss the bones, any pieces of fat or rind and reserve the little bits of meat and juices to be added after the beans are cooked. Remove the bag with the bay leaves and skim off any excess fat.



STEP TWO - THE PINTO BEANS

All beans need a little oil or fat to minimize foaming. For the **Rich Vegetable Broth** add 1 tablespoon olive oil. For the **Smoky Meat Broth** if the meat is fatty, you may not need any, otherwise add 1 tablespoon of olive oil. For a more traditional taste, use lard or



Rinse the soaked beans.

bacon fat. Rinse the soaked beans and add them to the broth in the pressure cooker. Check that the water level covers the ingredients by about 1 inch.

Lock the lid in place again and return to 15psi over high heat, lower the heat to maintain that pressure and then cook for 12 minutes. Use the natural release method to drop the pressure and then open the lid.

WANT PINTO BEAN SOUP?



Pinto Bean Soup and Cornbread.

At this point, you can serve up a wonderful, delicious bowl of pinto bean soup. Stir in the reserved meat, taste and adjust the seasonings... this is the right time to add the salt and things like vinegar, lime juice, salsa, or pickled peppers. To thicken the soup, scoop out 2 cups of beans and a little broth, and puree in a food processor or mash by hand, then stir them back into the soup. Simmer over low heat for a few minutes as the bean starch thickens the broth. Serve with a pan of fresh baked cornbread, or some steamy hot, buttered corn tortillas, and pass a bowl of salsa picante at the table.

No! Stop, what am I saying? Don't do that... just forget I ever mentioned soup, because we're supposed to be making with those beans!

STEP THREE - THE REFRIED BEANS

Drain the beans in a colander, reserving the leftover broth to freeze and use in other recipes. The beans also freeze well.



Here they are, my homemade Frijoles Refritos from scratch!

In a large skillet, heat a couple of tablespoons of lard or bacon fat -- this provides the 'mouth feel' you expect to find in Frijoles Refritos -- over medium heat, and add the cooked beans a little at a time, frying and mashing the beans at the same time. Continue until the beans are of the desired consistency. Add a little broth for a smoother texture. Finally, taste and adjust your seasonings, adding salt, vinegar, lime juice, hot sauce, or pickled hot peppers as desired. Enjoy Frijoles Refritos plain or melt some Pepper Jack cheese on top, make a dip for your favorite chips, use them in Mexican recipes for Tacos, Fajitas, Burritos, Quesadillas, Chalupas, Chimichangas, or try my Tostadas and Mexican Pizza recipes below.

REFRIED BEAN TOSTADAS



Tostada made with refried beans.

A fully loaded tostada, slathered with some of your refried beans, cheese, and fresh salsa, is a fast and healthy meal. Kids love tostadas because the crispy shell serves as an easy-to-hold, edible plate.

Made from corn tortillas, Tostada means, "to toast". They are similar to tacos, but the tostada is fried flat while the taco is folded. Tostadas serve as a crispy platform for a variety of toppings, and you can buy them ready-made in most supermarkets, but they very easy to make from corn tortillas.

There are two ways to make your own tostadas. To fry the tortillas, heat about an inch of vegetable oil in a skillet and fry each tortilla about 30 seconds per side, or until they are crisp and golden. Drain on paper towels. For a healthier version, lightly spray or brush both sides of the tortillas with oil and place them on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for about seven or eight minutes, or until crisp.

2 cups shredded lettuce
10 prepared Tostada Shells, pre-warmed
2 cups Refried Beans
1 cup prepared salsa
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1/2 cup chopped green onion tops 1/2 cup sliced ripe olives
2 medium ripe avocados, thinly sliced

For each serving, use the lettuce as a bed, spread about 1/4 cup of Refried Beans on a crisp tortilla. Top with lettuce, cheese, olives, avocado and taco sauce. Makes 10.
Cooks Note: Garnish with a dollop of sour cream and a spoonful of fresh guacamole if desired

