



Red Beans and Rice with Turkey Kielbasa

Every Monday, in every restaurant in New Orleans there is a tradition of serving red beans and rice for lunch or dinner. It's a great comforting food and everybody loves it. If you can make it on Sunday and serve it on Monday, it's even better after sitting for one night in the refrigerator!

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dried red kidney beans
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 stalk of celery, finely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, cored and chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 5 sprigs of fresh thyme (or 1 tsp. of dried thyme)
- 2 sprigs of fresh oregano (or 1 tsp. dried oregano)
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- ½ tsp. Tobasco sauce
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 1 lb. turkey kielbasa, cut into chunks
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Steamed rice (for serving)

Procedure:

1. Wash the dried beans and look through them for stones and throw away any which may have been in the bag.
2. Put the beans in a pot which will hold 3 quarts of water and fill the pot with water. Put the beans aside and let sit overnight. This will make the beans less gaseous and will cook faster when ready to cook. As an alternative you may put the beans in a pot of water and bring it to a boil. Turn off the heat and let them sit for one hour and then drain.
3. Put a 3-quart soup pot on the stove over high heat and add the olive oil. Swirl it about to make sure the bottom is covered. Add the onions, celery, green pepper, garlic, thyme, oregano, bay leaves and black pepper. Stir around so that the

vegetables will cook evenly and the flavors will mingle. It should be very aromatic. When the vegetables begin to appear translucent and they are just beginning to turn a golden color, add the tomato paste and tobasco sauce. Stir in the previously drained beans and add the vegetable stock. Bring to a boil and immediately turn the heat to low and allow the beans to simmer for 1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally to make sure there are none sticking to the bottom.

4. Check the beans to see if they are fully cooked, they will hold their shape but will be soft to the tooth. If so, the beans are done. Now is the time to season the beans with salt. You should never season beans with salt before or during cooking as doing so will make the beans tough. Add a little more pepper if you feel it is needed. If the beans seem too thick, add a little water to thin them out.
5. At this points the beans have been prepared in a strictly vegetarian way and can be served now with rice as a vegetarian entrée.
6. Place a nonstick frying pan on high heat and add 1 tbsp. of olive oil. Swirl the oil around to make sure bottom of pan is fully coated. Add the turkey kielbasa, which has been cut into chunks. Sauté the kielbasa by stirring it around in the pan until they are golden brown.
7. Add the kielbasa to the beans and allow to simmer for about 15 minutes. The beans are now ready to serve.
8. In the middle of a plate or soup bowl, put a portion of steamed rice in the center and ladle the beans around it. Sprinkle a few drops of tobasco sauce on top to give it zest.