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One of the best ways to make a house into a home is to invite some friends over for a meal. If you try this recipe, let me know how it turns out for you. And if you have a favorite recipe of your own, send it my way.

Black Bean Soup

Fall is here! Well, at least, as much Fall as we're likely to see here in the desert, so it's time to pull out some of the harvest-time recipes that suit the cooler weather. Soups are a great choice for this time of year, and this one gives you great home-made flavor without hours of simmering. A little chopping, a little mashing, and a little boiling will give you a ready-to-serve soup in about half an hour.

1 medium onion	1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 can (14 oz) chicken broth	1 medium stalk celery
1 large clove garlic	1 can (15 oz) black beans
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano	Parsley sprigs
1 medium carrot	1 small lemon
	1 slice bacon

1. Peel & chop the onion. Peel & finely chop the garlic. Peel & coarsely chop the carrot. Coarsely chop the celery. Finely chop enough parsley to make about 2 tablespoons. Set aside.
2. Cut bacon crosswise into 1/2-inch strips. Cook bacon over medium heat in a 2-quart saucepan, stirring constantly for a minute or two. Do not drain the pan.
3. Add onion & garlic to the bacon. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until onion is tender and yellowish. Bacon will still be soft. Remove from heat.
4. Stir in the chicken broth, carrot, celery, parsley, oregano, and pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to medium-low, cover, and simmer gently for about 10 minutes.
5. While broth is cooking, drain beans in a strainer & rinse under cool water. Measure out 1/2 cup of beans into a small bowl, and mash with a fork.
6. Stir whole beans & mashed beans into broth mixture. Cook another 3-5 minutes to heat beans. Garnish with lemon wedges & serve. (Makes 4 servings.)

The recipe is easily converted to a vegetarian meal. Simply use 1/4 cup of oil instead of the bacon strip, and substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth.



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