

Lamb & Black Bean Chili Crusty Parmesan Cheese Loaf Southern Banana Pudding



January brings a chill to the air throughout the South, and there's also a bit of a lull in most of our social calendars. January is typically a quiet month, making it the perfect time to invite friends over for a casual supper at home. Lamb and Black Bean Chili is an untraditional chili with a hint of cocoa. The unique flavor of lamb is layered with fresh jalapeno, cumin, oregano, chili powder and a hint of sweetness from brown sugar. Like most chili recipes, the flavors improve when made a day or two in advance. If you don't care for the taste of lamb, ground sirloin is a great substitute. The chili is fabulous when accompanied by Crusty Parmesan Cheese Loaf. Although it doesn't seem like a lot of garlic is going on this bread, it's really quite pungent when baked. For dessert, brew a hot pot of coffee and enjoy Southern Banana Pudding. This may well be one of the easiest and best tasting banana pudding recipes ever! Sour cream in the filling makes it taste like it's made from scratch. Enjoy!

Lamb and Black Bean Chili

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1-1/2 pounds ground lamb
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 medium jalapeno, seeded and finely chopped
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 green pepper, seeded and diced
1 tablespoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon oregano
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1-1/2 tablespoons brown sugar
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1 (14.5-ounce) can petite diced tomatoes
2 cups beef stock
3 (14.5-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add lamb and sauté until no longer pink. Season with salt and pepper. Drain well and set aside. Heat the remaining oil and add the jalapeno, onion and bell pepper. Sauté until vegetables are soft and begin to turn golden. Add the garlic, cumin, oregano, chili powder, garlic salt, brown sugar, cocoa powder and nutmeg and stir until fragrant. Add the tomatoes and beef stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and add in the lamb. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Stir in the black beans and cook, uncovered, for 30 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 8.

Crusty Parmesan Cheese Loaf

1 loaf crusty French bread (at least 14 inches long)

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Split loaf in half lengthwise. Brush each half with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sprinkle each half with equal amounts of parsley and garlic. Sprinkle with cheese. Place the bread on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Serves 8.

Southern Banana Pudding

2 (3.4 ounce) packages vanilla instant pudding mix
1 (8 ounce) carton sour cream
3-1/2 cups milk
Vanilla wafers
3 large ripe bananas
1 (8-ounce) carton frozen whipped topping, thawed

Combine pudding, sour cream, and milk in a large bowl; beat at low speed with an electric mixer for 2 minutes or until thickened. Line bottom and sides of a 3-quart bowl with vanilla wafers. Slice 1 banana, and layer slices over vanilla wafers. Spoon about one-third of pudding mixture over bananas. Repeat layers two more times, using vanilla wafers, remaining bananas, and remaining pudding. Cover and chill. Spread whipped topping over pudding just before serving. Serves 8-10.