



## Black Bean & Ham Soup

(makes 4 servings)

*Meaty, beany, peppery, citrusy, tomatoey - this soup has got the lot! We were first introduced to Black Bean Soup by a fan from Columbia who kindly shared her recipe for this classic South American staple which prompted us as ever, to create our own version using ingredients that are easy to find in the UK but it's one of those soups that you can really play around with dependent on what's available on the shelves.*

### Ingredients

- 1 x 400g tin black beans
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 250ml water
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 1 green pepper, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 sticks celery, peeled and sliced/diced
- 2 large cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- Black pepper
- 2 tablespoons freshly-squeezed lime juice
- Sea salt
- Crème fraîche
- Coriander leaves, chopped

### Method

Place the beans and the ham hock in a large pot, add the water and bay leaves and bring slowly to the boil. Reduce the heat to very low, cover and simmer for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, warm the oil in a soup pot, add the onion, red pepper, green pepper, carrots and celery and sauté gently until the vegetables are soft (around 10-15 minutes).

Add the garlic and cumin, stir well and continue to sauté for another 5 minutes then remove the pot from the heat.

Transfer the ham hock to a dish, remove the bay leaves, add the sautéed vegetables and the tomatoes, season generously with black pepper and stir well.

Transfer a quarter of the soup to a liquidiser or food processor and blitz until you get a pureed consistency (don't make it too smooth) then return to the pot.

Bring the soup slowly to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for around 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, remove the meat from the ham hock and chop or shred before adding it to the soup.

Add the lime juice, check the seasoning (you are unlikely to need salt as the ham is pretty salty) and serve topped with a tablespoon of creme fraiche (optional) and a scattering of coriander leaves.