

Are you looking for a tasty, low calorie, and satisfying alternative to a sad sandwich and chips for lunch? Soups and chili's are great lunch options, particularly ones that provide tons of plant based protein, fiber, and health healthy anti-oxidants. The recipe below tastes even better the next day. Make it on the weekend, have it for dinner, then place leftovers in single serving containers and presto: lunch all week. Pair with seasonal apple or pear slices and be the envy of everyone!



Butternut Squash Black Bean Chili

Total Time: 1 Hr, after you've chopped all your ingredients.

Serves: 8 - 10

Serving Size: 1-1/2 cups

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium yellow onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 red bell pepper, diced

3 cups (12 ounces) fresh butternut squash, peeled and diced

1/2 cup uncooked barley

2 teaspoons - 1-1/2 tablespoon chili powder; this really depends on your tastes and the spiciness of your chili powder. I use chipotle chili powder and only need 1 Tablespoon.

2 teaspoons cumin

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

2 cans (14.5 ounces each) tomatoes, diced. Fire-roasted tomatoes provide even smokier flavor.

1 can (15 ounces) canned pumpkin – not pumpkin pie filling.

2-3 cups reduced sodium vegetable broth or water for completely sodium free. I used 1-Porcini Mushroom Bouillon Cube from www.savoryspice.com, that are gluten free, black pepper free, vegan. They are not sodium free.

2 cans (15.5 ounces each) low sodium or no salt added black beans or kidney beans, drained and rinsed

1 cup California walnuts, toasted, chopped

Optional toppings: cilantro, avocado cubes, low fat Greek yogurt

Add the chili powder, cumin, oregano, salt, pepper, tomatoes, canned pumpkin, and vegetable broth. Stir to combine, then bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Cover and cook for 15 minutes.

Uncover after 15 minutes and stir in the black beans. Simmer uncovered for another 15-20 minutes until the chili thickens and the butternut squash and barley are cooked.

Serve with 2 tablespoons chopped, toasted walnuts and other desired toppings.

Dietitian tip: Don't skimp on the toppings. The crunchy walnuts, creamy and cool avocado and Greek yogurt provide a very satisfying contrast in texture and flavor – you won't miss the meat!