

MOLASSES BAKED BEANS

Ingredients:

1 pound dried navy beans
12 slices bacon
1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped onion
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1/4 cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Cover the beans with cold water and soak overnight. Drain beans, put them in a large pot, and cover them generously with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat, and simmer until beans are completely tender, 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Drain beans, and set aside, reserving 2 cups of the cooking liquid.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F. Set aside 6 whole strips of bacon, and dice the remaining 6. In a large pot, sauté the diced bacon over medium-high heat. Add the onion as soon as the bacon has rendered some fat, and sauté until softened, stirring occasionally, about 7 minutes. Add the molasses, brown sugar, vinegar, tomato paste, mustard, cloves, and reserved cooking liquid. Stir to combine, bring to a simmer, and simmer for a few minutes.
3. Add the cooked beans, and season generously with salt and pepper. Bring the beans to a simmer, then pour them into a baking dish, such as a 2 1/2- to 3-quart ceramic or earthenware pot.
4. Lay the reserved slices of bacon on top. Bake until the beans start bubbling and the bacon slices are cooked, about 1 hour. Serve the beans directly from the baking dish.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Note: Cook the navy beans a few days ahead and store, covered, in the refrigerator.

Contributed by: