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Red Beans and Rice

Thanks to Corrie for sharing one of her favorite dishes with us. It's tasty with or without the vegetarian "sausage."

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 15-oz. cans kidney beans (1 can drained, 2 cans with juices)
- 1 15-oz. can Italian stewed tomatoes
- 1 tsp. Creole or Cajun seasoning **or** ½ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1 package vegetarian "sausage" (optional)

1. Heat olive oil in heavy large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, and sauté until onion is brown (about 15 minutes).

2. Add kidney beans with their juices, stewed tomatoes, Creole seasoning, and the bay leaves. If you like it spicy, try adding the Cajun/Creole seasoning, a few dashes of cayenne pepper, and about ½ tsp. cumin.

3. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer until flavors are blended and mixture is very thick, stirring occasionally (about 45 minutes). If using the vegetarian "sausage," slice and add to mixture about 20 minutes before serving.

4. Divide cooked rice among large, shallow soup bowls. Spoon bean mixture over rice and serve. Serves 6.