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South of the Border Soup

Splurge on red and yellow bell peppers for this soup. The colors contrast beautifully with the brilliant green cilantro for a festive dish. If you prefer vegan chowder, stir in 2 cups of unsweetened soy milk after your soup is ready. Heat through and serve.

2 Tbs. canola oil
1 large onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
2 1/4 cups vegetable broth, divided
2 Tbs. flour
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. oregano
6 cups water
2 Tbs. vegetarian Worcestershire sauce
1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes (about 4-5 medium), peeled and diced
2 cups frozen corn
1 4-oz. can diced green chilies, undrained
1 14-oz. can pinto beans, drained
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, cleaned and chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a large stewpot over medium heat, sauté the onion and garlic in the canola oil until the onion is translucent. Add the bell peppers. Stir in 1/4 cup vegetable broth, flour, cumin, chili powder, and oregano. Cook for about 5 minutes.

2. Add remaining 2 cups vegetable broth and water. Stir in Worcestershire sauce. Add potatoes and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for about 15 minutes. Increase heat to medium and stir in frozen corn, green chilies, pinto beans, and cilantro. Cook for about 5 more minutes until ingredients are heated through.

3. If making chowder, add soy milk and heat through. Serve with warm tortillas, tortilla chips, or a green salad. Optional: Mexican beer with a lime wedge.