

Chili sin Carne al Mole

SERVES 6-8

This is Terry Hope Romero's recipe and I am a better woman for having tried it. The chocolate gives the chili a traditional mole flavor that is otherworldly. Terry tells us, "I like thick, chunky bean and vegetable-filled vegetarian chili as much as the next guy, but I've always had a longing for a meatless version of the more traditional Mexican-style chili con carne—a dark red broth, large chunks of meat, accompanied only by a few bits of onions, chiles, and spices. Seitan is ideal for this recipe, but being a meatless version it would seem rather stark without the addition of good old pinto beans. The consistency is more like a very chunky, thick soup than your usual stewlike chili. Like most soups and stews, this chili tastes even better reheated the next day."

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 small jalapeño, minced
- 1 small red bell pepper, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 pound seitan, coarsley chopped into 1/4-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons chile powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole, peeled tomatoes in sauce
- 3 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 3 tablespoons blackstrap molasses
- 2 (14-ounce) cans pinto beans, drained and well rinsed
- 2 1/2 cups vegetable broth

if TUP half cup less broth.

Preheat a Dutch oven (cast iron if you have it) or large pot (at least 6-quart) over medium-high heat; pour in and heat the olive oil. Add the onions and peppers and sauté for 2 minutes; then add the garlic and seitan. Cook for 8 minutes, until onions are soft. Add the chile powder, cinnamon, and cumin, stirring constantly for another minute. Add the tomatoes, cocoa powder, and molasses. Stir and break up the tomatoes with back of a spoon, then add the beans and vegetable broth. Cover and bring to a gentle boil, then lower the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes. Allow to sit at least 20 minutes before serving.