

Ham and Beans

This is real easy. The hard part is that you really need a ham bone to make it right. I recommend getting a spiral cut ham, have ham for a while...you can freeze some of the ham. But leave the bone and the meat at the end (and even more meat if you like it meaty). You can freeze the bone and all of the extra ham until you are ready to have ham and beans.

You can use ham hocks, but you will need to add some extra meat and it is not the same.

Ingredients:

- one ham bone with lots of meat attached.
- 2 lbs of Great Northern white beans
- 1 huge onion or two large ones
- Salt and pepper
- 1 pack of Jiffy Corn Muffin mix
- Some bee vomit (aka honey)

Process:

- Soak the beans in water overnight (at least 8 hours) in a big pan with lots of water. You need enough water to cover the beans and have at least 2 inches of water over the level of the beans. This is important. If you don't soak the beans in enough water, it will not be good.
- The next day, drain the beans and put them in a large pot with new water...lots of water. You will need a large pot for the bone anyway.
- Boil the beans until they are almost done. You can tell by taking a spoon, take out a bean, blow on it. The skin should immediately rupture. Taste the bean, it should not be crunchy but it should be al dente..but not yet mushy. It is important that the beans be almost done as once you add the ham, they will no longer get really soft (without a lot of cooking). Also, it is important NOT to salt the beans early as that affects the cooking as well.
- Toss the onions and the ham bone with meat into the pot and cook it (boiling slowly) for a couple of hours. You might need to add water from time to time. It just goes to how "soupy" you want it.
- You can pepper the soup at this time, to taste.
- After two to three hours, fish the ham bone out with the large chunks of meat. Strip the bone and cut the meat into the chunks you want to deal with and put them back into the pot. Hint: I usually try to scrap out some of the marrow and put it into the pot as well. Discard the bone.
- I usually cook it for another hour or so before I salt it (just to see how the salty ham has affected the soup).

Serving:

- True ham and beans need to be served with hot corn bread (Jiffy is the best). I like a little honey on mine. Your grandfather likes to butter a piece and "accidently" drop it into the soup.

- Just slop it into bowls and eat away (Some folks insist that others take some Beano first).

Storage:

- This freezes well and reheats well.
- There are some who state that it tastes better upon the second heating.

An international note:

- Whilst I was in Toulouse meeting with Airbus, I found that they had a regional dish called cassoulet. It is white beans, duck, sausage, and onions. It was great and very similar to our Kansas ham and beans.