



Perfect Frijoles Refritos (Mexican Refried Beans) Recipe

JUMP TO RECIPE

Cook	2 hrs 20 mins
Active	20 mins
Total	2 hrs 20 mins
Makes	4 cups

Ingredients

- 1/2 pound (227 g) dried pinto or black beans
- Water
- 2 sprigs fresh epazote or oregano (see notes)
- 1 medium white onion, 1/2 minced (about 1/2 cup; 26 g), 1/2 left whole
- 2 medium cloves garlic
- Kosher salt
- 6 tablespoons (77 g) lard, bacon drippings, vegetable oil, or butter (see notes)

Directions

1. In a large pot, cover the beans with cold water by at least 2 inches. Add herb sprigs, the whole onion half, and garlic cloves and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to simmer and cook until beans are very tender, about 1 to 2 hours. Season with salt. Drain beans, reserving bean-cooking liquid. You should have about 3 cups of cooked beans; if you have more, measure out 3 cups of beans and reserve the rest for another use. Discard herb sprigs, onion, and garlic.
2. In a large skillet, heat lard, bacon drippings, or oil until shimmering, or butter until foaming, over medium-high heat. Add minced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent and lightly golden, about 7 minutes. Stir in beans and cook for 2 minutes. Add 1/4 cup of reserved bean-cooking liquid. Using bean masher, potato masher, or back of a wooden spoon, smash the beans to form a chunky purée; alternatively, use a stick blender to make a smoother purée. Thin with more bean cooking water until desired consistency is reached. If refried beans become too wet, simmer, stirring, until thickened; if they become too dry, add more bean-cooking liquid, 1 tablespoon at a time, as needed. Season with salt and serve.

Special Equipment

Bean masher, potato masher, or [stick blender](#)

Notes

Epazote, a Mexican herb, can be found at Mexican grocers. To add other flavors to the refried beans, try sautéing a pinch of ground cumin or fresh chiles with the minced onion, or puréeing toasted dried chiles into the mixture. Different cooking fats give different flavors to the beans: lard is one of the most traditional, and it adds a porky, funky depth to the

beans that's hard to beat; bacon ups the ante even more by layering in a smoky flavor; vegetable oil keeps things neutral so you can really enjoy the flavor of the beans and the aromatics; and butter is decadent and rich without being overpowering.