

# SEASONED

## NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the monthly Seasoned Newsletter. (This is #12; if you missed #11, it's [here](#).) The weather is starting to turn chilly, so we've got a warming Black Bean Soup in this issue. There's also Roasted Carrots and Red Onions, an easy side dish that can be transformed into an entrée when served over rice. Our Spicy Roasted Nuts are an excellent snack, but also make a great gift for friends or neighbors. Of course we've got a kitchen trick and a balance exercise for you, along with a recommendation for what is perhaps the single most essential kitchen tool, a chef's knife. This issue's "kitchen how to" shows you how to use that knife to chop and slice most efficiently.

**Let's get started!**



# Cuban Black Bean Soup

Though this recipe has a long list of ingredients, don't be intimidated—most of them are staples that you're likely to already have on hand. Rich in flavor and soft in texture, black beans are perfect for soup. These beans take well to the classic Latin American flavors of cumin, chili powder, cilantro, and lime—and you can add more or less of any of these, depending on what you like. You might want to double this recipe when you make it, since it keeps for several days in the refrigerator and freezes well.

HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 1½ HOURS MAKES: ABOUT 6 CUPS (4 SERVINGS)

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 carrot, scrubbed or peeled and chopped
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced or chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper (if you like spicy)
- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 to 5 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- Kosher salt and black pepper

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put a large, heavy-bottomed lidded pot on the stove, turn the heat to medium, and add the oil.
2. When the oil is hot, add the onion, carrot, celery, garlic, and spices and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Add the beans and 4 cups broth, raise the heat to high, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to medium and cook, partially covered, for 1 hour, stirring frequently. If at any point the soup seems too thick and starts to look like mud, add ½ cup to 1 cup more broth.
4. Stir in the lime juice and taste the soup. Add additional lime juice or a pinch of salt and pepper if you think it needs it. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 3 days.



## Or You Could

Add texture and flavor by garnishing the completed soup with cilantro leaves, a dollop of plain yogurt, and/or diced avocado.

## Tip: Freeze it Right

- **Cool it:** Putting hot soup directly in the freezer can thaw your already-frozen food. Let the soup cool to room temperature before freezing it.
- **Portion it:** Turn your big batch of soup into convenient grab-and-go meals by freezing it in individual servings. Quart-size resealable freezer bags will accommodate a single serving while giving the soup room to expand as it freezes—plus, when frozen flat, they stack easily.

# Roasted Carrots and Red Onions

Earthy carrots and onions come out of the oven sweetly caramelized in this easy dish. Leftovers will keep for up to 3 days, covered and refrigerated, so you can serve them as a side dish one night, then reheat and serve with rice for a great vegetarian meal another night. Choose carrots that are about 1 inch in diameter. If your carrots are smaller, leave them whole; if they're larger, extend the roasting time slightly.

HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 55 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS



## INGREDIENTS

- 1½ pounds carrots, peeled or well scrubbed and halved lengthwise
- 1 red onion, peeled and cut into 8 wedges
- 2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn on the oven and set the heat to 425 degrees.
2. Toss the carrots, onion, oil, salt, and pepper together on a rimmed baking sheet. Spread the vegetables out in an even layer.
3. Roast until the vegetables are tender and the undersides are well browned, 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the size of the carrots. Sprinkle with the thyme and serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days.

# Spicy Roasted Nuts

These nuts are crunchy and just a little spicy. They are a great snack and, if you like to give food gifts, they make an excellent present. Package them in plastic bags or small lidded jars. Even if you're making them just for yourself, it's worth making the whole 4 cups, since they will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for about a month.

HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES MAKES: ABOUT 4 CUPS



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups raw almonds, walnuts, or pecans, or a combination
- 1½ tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 300 degrees.
2. Put all the ingredients on a rimmed baking sheet and mix well. Spread out the coated nuts into a single layer.
3. Put the baking sheet in the oven and roast until the nuts are a shade darker, 10 to 12 minutes. Set aside to cool before eating or, if you are giving them as a gift, packaging.

## Or You Could

Make the nuts...

- **Sweet:** Add 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup.
- **Curried:** Add 2 teaspoons curry powder.
- **Spicier:** Double the chili powder.

# A Trick, a Tool, an Exercise

## Chef's Knife

This is the go-to tool for more than 90 percent of daily kitchen tasks, including slicing and dicing fruits, vegetables, meats, and fish. Although they can be very expensive, one relatively affordable version that we like is the **Victorinox Fibrox 7.5-inch Pro** (about \$27).



## Peeling Ginger

With its knobby, uneven surface, ginger can be hard to peel—when we do it with a paring knife, we often end up cutting away a lot of the ginger along with the skin. To avoid this, use a spoon to peel your ginger. Just hold the ginger firmly in one hand and, with the other, scrape the edge of the spoon along the surface to remove the skin.



## Narrow Stance Reaches

1. Stand with your feet together, or as close as you can while still feeling steady.
2. Stand tall and reach forward as far as you can with both arms.
3. Progress by reaching out to the sides or varying directions.
4. Do 20 reaches in each direction.

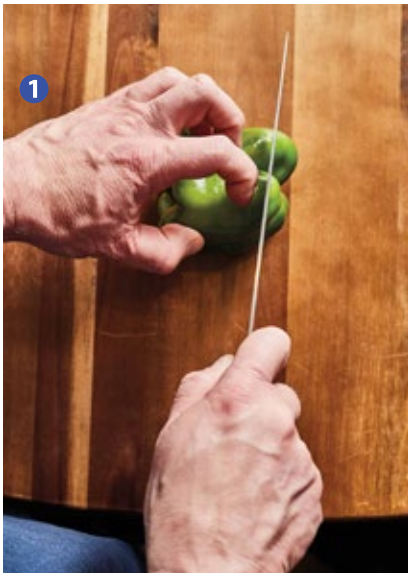
# Kitchen Skill: How to Use a Chef's Knife

A chef's knife might be the most essential kitchen tool of all, the one you use to chop, slice, and dice everything from apples to zucchini. Having a sharp knife and knowing how to handle it will make cooking much faster—and much more fun.



## How to Hold the Knife

Rather than grabbing the knife as if you were shaking hands with it, hold it with your thumb on the side opposite your fingers, right at the base of the blade. This gives you much more control. (Some people like to place the index finger along the top of the blade, but whatever feels right to you is right.)



## How to Slice

Whatever you are slicing, from a bell pepper to a skirt steak, the process and the approach are the same.

- 1 Hold your free hand in a kind of "claw grip," with the fingertips holding whatever it is you are chopping, and the knuckles closer to the knife.
- 2 As you continue chopping, move the claw grip hand steadily along the surface of the item you're chopping. This allows you to hold the item you're chopping steady without cutting your finger.

## How to Chop

Chopping begins with your hands in the same position as for slicing. The next step is to keep the point of the knife steady on the cutting surface while moving the cutting edge of the knife across whatever you are chopping.

- 1 Start by roughly chopping the item, using your free hand in a "claw grip" to hold the item as you chop, just as you did when slicing, and steadily moving this hand as you chop.
- 2 Once the item is roughly chopped, hold the point of the knife steady against the cutting surface, then chop up and down with the blade, steadily moving it back and forth across the item as you chop, until it is as finely chopped as you want.

