

## Spicy Black Bean Soup with Aji Amarillo and Avocado-Lime Cream Sauce

Serves 2-3; prep and cook 45 minutes

2 tablespoons canola oil  
½ red onion; chopped roughly  
2 green onions; chopped roughly  
2 garlic cloves; minced  
2 teaspoons aji amarillo powder\*  
2 teaspoons chili powder  
2 teaspoons cumin  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 can black beans; rinsed and drained  
1 can chicken stock

1 avocado; flesh scooped out  
Juice of 1 lime  
½ cup chopped cilantro leaves  
½ cup Mexican crema or half-and-half\*\*  
Salt and pepper

Queso fresco; crumbled  
Lime wedges  
Cilantro leaves  
Paprika; for garnish

*\*I was able to find powdered aji amarillo through my local specialty foods store but you can also buy it online. Otherwise, a good alternative might be to use a scant sprinkling of cayenne pepper or bump up the chili powder to 1 tablespoon.*

*\*\*Mexican crema is similar in consistency to half-and-half but with much more flavor – a bit like cottage cheese. I usually find it at latin American markets in a tall screw-top container.*

In a medium-sized saucepot, heat the canola oil over medium-high heat. Toss in the chopped red onions, green onions, garlic, aji amarillo, chili powder, cumin, and salt and pepper. Mix together with a wooden spoon to combine and sauté until the vegetables are slightly softened.

Add in the black beans and combine with the onions and seasonings; let them mingle together for about another 30 seconds. Pour in the chicken stock and stir. Let the soup come up to a boil and then lower to a simmer and cook, uncovered for about 30 minutes, tasting for seasonings.



Meanwhile, put the avocado, lime juice, cilantro, crema or half-and-half, and salt and pepper into a blender and whirl together until it turns a soft green color and the mixture has loosened up a bit. If it's too heavy, add more liquid. Taste for seasonings and then pour into a container.

After 30 minutes, take the soup off the heat and use a stick blender or the stand blender to blitz the soup into a puree.

Pour the soup into a bowl and drizzle in the avocado-lime cream sauce over the top and finish with a sprinkle of queso fresco, cilantro leaves, paprika, and serve with a wedge of lime.