Creamy Cajun-Spiced Red Beans

Red beans and rice tie soul food to Creole and Cajun cuisines of Louisiana. This version celebrates the dish's creamy, spiced essence while incorporating coconut milk and brown rice for a modern, vegan-friendly take. If you prefer, you can replace coconut milk with cashew cream.

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons vegetable broth or 1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium red bell pepper, diced

1 medium onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning (or homemade blend with paprika, oregano, thyme, cayenne, garlic powder, and onion powder)

2 cups cooked red kidney beans (or one 19-ounce can, rinsed and drained)

1/2 cup unsweetened coconut milk (light or regular)

1 cup vegetable broth

1½ teaspoons cornstarch mixed with 1½ tablespoons water

1 tablespoon nutritional yeast (optional)

Salt and black pepper to taste

Chopped parsley and green onions for garnish (optional)

Instructions:

1. Heat the 3 tablespoons of vegetable broth or one tablespoon of olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the bell pepper, and onion, and sauté for 5-7 minutes, until softened.
2. Add the garlic and Cajun seasoning, stirring for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Stir in the red kidney beans and vegetable broth. Let the mixture simmer for 10-12 minutes, allowing the flavors to meld and the sauce to thicken slightly.

4. Mix in the coconut milk and nutritional yeast, if using. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.
5. Garnish with fresh parsley and sliced green onions. Serve with brown rice or quinoa and a side dish of collard greens or okra.

