

K's Kitchen: Spicy soup ideal on winter night

By Kathryn Reed

It's always good to have a Plan B when it comes to dinner – especially when guests are coming.

Once I realized what a hectic day I was going to have I knew I needed to find something easy to make. Out came the crock pot. This would allow me to have dinner cooking all day and not have to worry whether I would have it ready when my friends arrived.

Another bonus to using a crock pot is that the aroma of whatever is cooking then permeates the house. And a one pot dish makes cleaning up so easy.

This recipe has a little kick to it, which the three of us enjoyed. Know that the flavors are going to meld as they cook, so don't rely on the initial taste to know if you have the seasonings adjusted correctly.

Assuming I'm going to be around, I start with the crock pot on high. When I leave the house I put it on low.

Served with a salad, bread and wine it's a complete meal.



Spicy Vegetable Soup

2 C yellow onion, chopped
1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
1 C celery, diced
1 large carrot, diced
1 jalapeño pepper, minced
8 ounces cremini mushrooms, chopped
6 garlic cloves, minced
3 T tomato paste
1 T cayenne pepper
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp dried oregano
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp smoked paprika
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp red pepper flakes
1 (14.5-ounce) can stewed tomatoes
3 C water
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ C vegetable broth
1 bottle of beer
1 (14.5-ounce) can kidney beans, drained
Salt

Place all of the ingredients into a crock pot. Stir. Cook all day.

Adjust seasonings if need be.