

CRAB CHILI

4-6 servings

There's a gentle heat in this chili, but it's not really hot. If you'd like less heat, skip the crushed red pepper and/or use a mild chili powder. I used Penzey's medium.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Pinch crushed red pepper
- Small onion, finely diced
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts only, well-washed, sliced thinly and chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely diced
- Small fennel bulb, cored, and finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced green bell pepper
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons chili powder or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon each ground coriander and ground cumin
- Small handful chopped fresh parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups clam juice
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 2 cups cooked white beans -- Great Northern or Cannellini (15 ounce can drained and rinsed or from scratch)
- 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup cooked lump crab meat or 2 drained 6-ounce cans of crab
- Green Onion Salsa for garnish (recipe below)
- Grated extra sharp white Cheddar cheese for garnish

GREEN ONION SALSA: 3 tablespoons each minced green onion, green bell pepper, and fresh cilantro stirred gently together

In A 6-quart heavy pot with lid, heat oil over medium heat and add the pinch of crushed red pepper, cooking for 30 seconds. Tip in the fresh vegetables: onion, leeks, celery, fennel, garlic, and green pepper. Season with 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, the chili powder, coriander, cumin, parsley, and bay leaf. Cook, stirring, 6 or 7 minutes, without browning. Pour in liquids -- clam juice, broth and water--along with the beans and drained tomatoes. Bring to a boil; taste and adjust seasonings. Cook 20 minutes or until everything is quite tender. Stir in the crab; heat through and simmer a few minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings. Serve hot with garnishes. Whoever gets the bay leaf does the dishes.

Store leftovers immediately and tightly covered for no more than 48 hours.