Red Beans and Rice

Seasoning Mix

3 bay leaves
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ teaspoon white pepper
½ teaspoon black pepper

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1 pound dried red kidney beans
2 tablespoons bacon fat or canola oil
1 pound andouille sausage, sliced thin
2 medium onions, chopped
1 large green bell pepper, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 pound pickle meat (pickled pork)
5 cups cooked rice

Rinse beans thoroughly to remove excess dirt. Place beans in a large bowl; cover with cold water and soak overnight.

In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat bacon fat or canola oil. Add sausage; sauté until brown on both sides. Add onions, bell pepper, celery and garlic; sauté until tender. Add seasoning mix; stir. Add soaked beans and liquid ("bean liquor"), pickle meat and 8 cups water. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to simmer. Cook 1 1/2 to 2 hours, stirring often, until beans are tender. Add additional water, if needed, to keep beans from scorching. Towards the end of the cooking time, mash some of the beans against the side of the pot with a cooking spoon (this will help create a creamy consistency). Adjust seasoning if necessary. Serve over hot cooked rice with lots of French bread and hot sauce options. Serves 8-10.

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