Red Beans and Rice (our version of Jans)

Red beans and rice is a big deal in the New Orleans area and you can find it as a "special" in many restaurants on Mondays. As the story goes, Monday was laundry day in the deep south and women didn't want to be cooking all day on Mondays so this was the dish they chose. Well, red beans and rice didn't sound like something we'd like based on its name so in all the time we spent in that area we never ordered up this dish and really had no idea what the ingredients were. What a mistake!

A fellow food forum member and also a lover of Cajun and Creole food put out this recipe and I thought it was worth a try so I made it (easy peasey). Well, it has become a regular rotation item and I haven't made gumbo since. Unlike other recipes from the area where ingredients can vary wildly, the contents of this dish are somewhat uniform. It will always have beans, andouille, holy trinity, garlic, and many will have a ham component, often a ham hock.

Since making this the first time I have tried several others including the very highly rated NYT take on it and they all taste very similar with the only real difference being the amount of time taken due to technique and the spices used.

So here's what I make every week or two. I have doubled the amount of spices used in the original recipe because ¼ teaspoon is nothing in this recipe and I changed up the technique a bit because I think it works better.

Ingredients –

14 oz or 16 oz package andouille. Cut into 1/4 inch slices. We use Aidells Cajun Style Andouille
1 1/2 cup onions, diced
1 large bell pepper, diced
3/4 cup celery, diced
3 large cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 pound ham, diced
1 cup rice, cooked
4-6 oz of chicken stock or water to reach appealing consistency
2 16 oz. cans red chili beans, we use 1 Bush's Medium Chili sauce and 1 Bush's Mild Chili sauce
1/2 tsp each of fresh ground black pepper, thyme and basil
Hot sauce to taste, try before adding (We don't add)

Process -
In a heavy pot put a little oil and brown the andouille and ham on medium heat and set aside. Now sweat the onions, celery, and bell pepper in the same pot for maybe 5-7 min. on med high heat. Now add the meat back, the garlic, and the remaining ingredients except the rice, add liquid to your liking and bring to a boiling point. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook about 30 minutes stirring occasionally. Serve over cooked rice.

Notes –

If you like spicey try 2 cans of medium chili sauce beans.

A bunch of scallions sliced up is a good addition if you have them.

NYT Version: https://www.deansmiley.com/Recipes/Red-Beans-and-Rice-NYT.pdf