Gut Friendly/Gut Healthy Chili con Carne (serves 8)

Recent studies have found a strong correlation between high levels of lycopene in the blood and lower rates of heart disease and prostate cancer. A similar connection exists between soluble fiber and lower rates of heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. The following recipe is a great source of these health-promoting compounds.

Ingredients:

- Ground beef, lean, 1 lb.
- Ground pork, 1/2 lb.
- Kidney beans, one 15oz. can
- Pinto beans, one 15oz. can
- Pinquitos (pink beans with chili pepper, onion), one 15oz. can
- Tomatoes, diced (petite-cut with diced jalapeños), one 15oz. can
- Tomato paste, one 6oz. can
- Yellow onion, 1 cup, diced
- Red bell pepper, chopped, 1 cup
- Orange (or yellow) bell pepper, chopped, 1 cup
- Garlic, minced: ½ tablespoon, level
- White pepper: dash or about 1/8 teaspoon
- Salt, ½ teaspoon
- Red wine, 4 oz. (Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon)
- Extra virgin olive oil, 1 tablespoon
- Chili Spice Mix: 2 tablespoons Ancho chili powder, 2 tablespoons brown sugar, 1 tablespoons cumin, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, ½ teaspoon ground black pepper, ¼ teaspoon salt.

Preparation and Cooking:

Prepare the spice mix in a small glass bowl, mix well and transfer to a zip-lock bag.

Add the diced tomatoes, tomato paste and canned beans to a large cooking pot (Stop! Don’t drain those beans! According to renowned nutritionist, Dr. Liz Applegate, that slimy bean juice is rich in health-promoting soluble fiber). Stir in two heaping teaspoons of the Chili Spice Mix and bring the beans and tomatoes to a slow boil over medium high heat.

Add a tablespoon of olive oil to a large skillet and warm to medium high heat. Add ½ tablespoon of minced garlic, 1/8 teaspoon of white pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt and 1 cup of diced onions. Sauté for about 2 minutes or until the onion starts to turn translucent. Add the red and orange chopped bell peppers and sauté for another 3 minutes. Add the sautéed onions and peppers to the beans in the cooking pot and stir.

To the same skillet, add the ground beef and pork and ¼ teaspoon salt and cook until the meat start to brown. Add the 4 oz. of red wine, 1 heaping teaspoon of the Chili Spice Mix and cook until most of the moisture has boiled off. Drain off any excess liquid fat and add the meat to the cooking pot with the beans, tomatoes and onions. (Note: You can always add more Chili Spice Mix if you like your chili extra hot.)

Simmer the chili for about 20 to 30 minutes and its ready to eat. Serve with shredded cheddar cheese on the top.