

MONTEREY JACK'S PINTO BEANS

Baked in a tortilla crust.

3 T vegetable oil	2 c chopped onion
1 28 oz can plum tomatoes, drained & chopped	1 t hot pepper sauce
3 cans (15 to 16 oz) pinto beans, drained & rinsed	1 large yellow bell pepper, diced
1 large red bell pepper, diced	½ t salt
1 ½ T finely chopped garlic	4 T chopped fresh cilantro, divided
1 ½ T chili powder	2 c shredded monterey jack cheese
1 c finely ground or crushed tortilla chips	1 ½ t ground cumin

Heat oil in a large heavy skillet over medium high heat. When hot, add onions and red and yellow bell peppers, sauté, stirring about 4 minutes. Add garlic and sauté another 2 minutes. Add chili powder & cumin; cook, stirring, another 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, beans, hot pepper sauce, salt and 3 T cilantro; stir to combine. Remove from heat, taste and add more salt if needed.

Preheat oven to 375°. Spray a 9x13" pan with non-stick cooking spray. Spread bean mixture evenly in pan. Combine cheese and crushed tortilla chips; spread in an even layer on top of beans. (Dish can be prepared 1 day ahead to this point. Cover and refrigerate. Uncover before baking.) Bake until hot and cheese has melted to form a crust, 20-25 minutes. Sprinkle top of casserole with remaining 1 T cilantro before serving.

Makes 8 servings