

## Vegan Butternut Squash and Okra Gumbo

For the roux:

- ¼ cup avocado oil (or other mild oil)
- 1 cup unbleached white flour (or you can use white whole wheat)

For the sauté:

- ¾ cup minced onion
- ¾ cup minced bell pepper
- 2 teaspoons garlic
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons regular paprika
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt (or to taste)
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper (or to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon to 1 tablespoons ground cayenne pepper, to taste

For the simmer:

- 8 cups water
- 3 cups sliced okra
- 2 cups cubed butternut squash
- 2 cups chopped vegan Andouille sausage or your favorite cooked beans

For serving:

- About 4 cups cooked brown rice (1/2 cup per serving)
- Tabasco or other vinegar based hot sauce

Begin by preparing the roux: In a large soup pot, over low heat, add the oil and flour and mix well. Slowly toast this mixture. It will start out a pale white and then after about 15 minutes it will be a light brown. After 15 more it will be more maple colored.

The most important thing is to not let this burn and stir often throughout the roux cooking process. If you burn it you must throw it out and start again. So go low and slow. It is a good idea to prep the veggies while this is cooking. Cut a little, stir the roux, cut some more, etc.

Once the roux is a medium brown and begins to smell almost like toasted nuts, add in the onion, bell pepper, and garlic. Turn up the heat to medium low, stir and sauté until the veggies begin to soften.

Add in the herbs and spices. You can leave the salt, pepper, and cayenne to add before serving if you want. Or start small and add more at the end if you're not sure how you like it yet.

Add the water, okra, butternut squash, and Andouille or beans. Cover and let cook over medium-low heat until the okra and squash are soft, about 20 minutes.

Taste and re-season salt, pepper, and cayenne as needed. Serve topped with rice and hot sauce on the side.