

Asian Black Bean and Asparagus Salad

I'm a big Costco fan. Knowing that I'm getting a bargain by buying in bulk is very satisfying, even if that means I have to convert my coat closet into an overflow food pantry. One day, behind the thirty rolls of toilet paper and eleven remaining paper towel rolls, I found an eight-pack of black beans. There's only so much chili a person can eat, so I came up with this recipe as an alternative. Now I have room for the ten-pound bag of basmati rice I just bought.

INGREDIENTS

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup red onion, thinly sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cilantro, chopped
2 cans black beans, rinsed and drained
2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon Asian hot oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Asian sesame oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar
1 bunch asparagus
 $\frac{1}{2}$ red or yellow bell pepper, diced*
2 teaspoons white and black sesame seeds

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine onion, cilantro, and beans. In a small bowl, combine rice wine vinegar, soy sauce, oils, and

sugar. Pour vinegar mixture over bean mixture and gently mix. Marinate at room temperature for 20 – 30 minutes.

Steam asparagus until al dente, about five minutes. Run asparagus under cold water when ready. Cut asparagus spears into quarters.

Mix asparagus together with bean mixture and add in red or yellow pepper. Garnish with sesame seeds and serve.

**NOTE – If you like heat, substitute a hot red pepper for the bell pepper.*