

I ain't scared



I am not a brave person. Need an example? For the longest time I was afraid of thunderstorms. Not just afraid. Petrified. I'd burst into tears when hearing thunder and run around unplugging things like a crazy old lady. I'm not sure why I would unplug things or what that had to do with my personal safety...but whatever.

Maybe my behavior had something to do with the fact that my childhood babysitter would make us huddle in the bathroom and prepare for a tornado any time it rained. I know. Crazy, right? Believe it or not I slowly learned that rain clouds and even the occasional thunderstorm are not to be feared. My point is that fear is a learned behavior. One of my favorite places to push the boundaries of anxiety is in the kitchen. Surely if I can stop crying when I hear the thunder roll, I can be fearless and do things like make up a soup recipe. Right?

Last week while exploring the World Wide Web (I think I'm funny) I came across something called pumpkin chowder. I was like...what? Canned pumpkin can be a part of something that doesn't involve a pie or some sort of decorating contest? As I was reading the ingredients list I became annoyed. Things like cooking sherry, fennel and chopped peppers were listed. Now, I know that I don't have a precious little baby like my friend Whitney, but my time cannot be spent chopping peppers and looking for cooking sherry at the grocery store. I've got a whole mess of New York Housewives episodes to catch up with on the DVR. My cooking these days involves being as quick and easy as possible. So I reviewed the list of ingredients.

Decided that what I was looking at resembled a vegetable stew (with canned pumpkin) and decided to be brave and figure it out in the store.

So the question is...what can you challenge yourself to make without a recipe? How can you have your own version of Iron Chef at home? Please know that I understand that making up a soup recipe is a lot different than making up some crazy souffle or coming up with a new way to roast a chicken. Baby steps, y'all. Baby. Steps. I apologize for not taking pictures of my delicious stew, but I was scared it might be ugly with the addition of pumpkin. By the time I realized it was gonna be alright it was too late. Just trust me. It's deliciously fall-tastic.

Here's what I did. You can add or leave out whatever you want. F'real y'all. It's not rocket science, especially with a bunch of vegetables.

1 onion (chopped)

1 bag of frozen mixed veggies (carrots, green beans etc...)

2 cans of black beans

1 can of kidney beans

1 can of Rotel Original (google it)

2 small cans of diced green chillies

2 cans sliced stewed tomatoes

1 can vegetable stock

1 can pureed pumpkin

2 teaspoons of ground cumin

salt and pepper to taste.

Fry that chopped onion. Girl, you know that nothing in the kitchen should star without a fried onion. Once the onion has softened add your cumin. I like to let the onions simmer in the cumin for a bit, it gives them a nice flavor. Begin to haphazardly add the other ingredients as you will. You want to stir them in as you go. Save the vegetable stock for last. The pumpkin. I know. It's weird. Scoop it out of that can and stir it in. It basically dissolves into your soup. It'll add a slight earthy flavor to your soup and give you a lot of extra fiber. You know fiber is good, so just put it in there! Once you've added all of the other ingredients toss in the veggie stock, stir everything around a bit and bring to a boil. Once you're bubbling up for a minute or two bring the temperature down to low and let your soup simmer for about 30 minutes or so. You're ready to eat.

I love making soup. I can't lie. I mostly like making soup because its one pot and you throw a bunch of things in and hope for the best. I'm going to dig around a bit and see if I can't find a better way to eat canned pumpkin. Now, I know I could get crazy and cook an actual pumpkin, but I don't think I have the energy or the counter space for that. There must be a delicious pumpkin soup out there. There must be. I'm gonna find it, y'all. I promise.

xo