Eggplant and Bean Chili *(NYT)*
Serves 4

- 59 ml canola oil
- 450 g eggplant, not peeled, and cut into 13-cm cubes (6 C)
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (about 1 C)
- 2 small carrots, peeled and cut into 6-mm dice (1 C)
- 2 T tomato paste
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 T pure chili powder (or smoked paprika)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 (400 g) can crushed tomatoes and their juices
- 1 (400 g) can red kidney beans, rinsed
- 200 g uncooked brown lentils
- ¼ C thinly sliced scallions, plus more for garnish
- 1 T lime juice
- Sour cream, grated Cheddar, sliced jalapeños and tortilla chips, for topping (optional)

1. In a large Dutch oven, heat **2 T oil** over **medium heat**.
2. Add **eggplant**, season with **salt** and **pepper** and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden in spots, **5 minutes**; transfer to a plate.
3. Reduce heat to **medium-low**. Add the remaining **2 T oil**, then add the **onion** and **carrots** to the pot and season with **salt** and **pepper**. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, **5 minutes.**
4. Add **tomato paste** and **garlic**, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomato paste is lightly caramelized, **about 3 minutes**.
5. Stir in **chili powder**, **cumin** and **oregano** until well blended.
6. Add **tomatoes**, **kidney beans**, **lentils**, the reserved **eggplant** and **480 ml water (add vegetable bouillon)**. Bring to a boil over **medium-high heat**, stirring to release any browned bits from the bottom of pot.
7. Cover, reduce heat to **medium-low** and cook, undisturbed, until eggplant is very tender and flavors have melded together, **30 minutes**. Uncover and stir, mashing some of the eggplant to create some creamy texture.
8. Stir in the **scallions** and **lime juice**; taste and season with **salt** and **pepper**.
9. Divide chili among bowls and garnish with more scallions. Finish with any of the optional toppings and serve warm.

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