BLACK BEAN SOUP

1/2 C. long grain brown rice (raw), rinsed and drained
1 C. water
2-16 oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained well
1 T. olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 T. finely chopped jalapeno pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper, optional
1 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. chili powder
1-11 oz. can diced tomatoes, drained
1 1/2 qts. low-sodium chicken broth
Juice of 1/2 fresh lime
2 T. chopped fresh cilantro
3 C. reduced-fat shredded Cheddar cheese

In a 1-quart saucepan, place the rice and water and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce the heat to a simmer, then loosely cover and simmer for about 15 minutes until all of the liquid is absorbed. Remove from the heat.
In a food processor or blender, purée the beans and set aside. In a 3-quart saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, jalapeno, garlic, cumin, cayenne pepper, oregano, paprika, and chili powder and sauté until the onion begins to soften. Add the tomatoes and stir. Add the puréed beans, rice, broth and lime juice and stir with a wire whisk. Bring to a soft simmer and continue cooking for 20 minutes, stirring once every 5 minutes. Serve with fresh cilantro and cheese.

NUTRITION FACTS: Serving size: 1 1/2 cup per serving, 8 servings