

Chili

By Ali Slagle

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Total Time 1½ hours

Rating ★★★★★ (1,690)



Christopher Testani for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

This is a spicy, smoky and hearty pot of chili. It's the kind of chili you need after a long day skiing — or hibernating. To create a rich and thick sauce, simmer aromatics, chili powder and cocoa powder with a small quantity of tomato sauce and a big quantity of ground beef. Use meat with ample fat (at least 20 percent), because it deepens the flavor of those aromatics. If you like the meat in your chili to be so soft it nearly crumbles, simmer your batch longer; if you prefer your chili without beans, just leave them out. Just don't forget the toppings.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

2 tablespoons neutral oil, such as grapeseed

2 pounds ground beef, preferably 20 percent fat

Salt and pepper

1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped or grated

1 tablespoon ground cumin

1 tablespoon store-bought or homemade chili powder, plus more if needed

1 chipotle pepper in adobo plus 1 teaspoon sauce (or 1 additional tablespoon chili powder)

1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce

1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder

2 (15-ounce) cans beans (such as pinto, black or any bean you like in chili), with their liquid

1½ teaspoons apple cider vinegar, plus more if needed

Grated sharp Cheddar, sour cream, hot sauce, sliced scallions, chopped white onion, cilantro leaves, crushed tortilla or corn chips, for serving (optional)

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat the oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high. Working in batches if necessary to avoid crowding the pot, use your hands to break the beef into small chunks (about 2 inches each) and add a single layer to the pot. Season with salt and pepper, then cook, flipping once, until browned on two sides, 4 to 6 minutes. (Meat won't be cooked through.) Transfer to a bowl, leaving the fat in the pot.

Step 2

Reduce heat to medium, add the onion and season with salt and pepper. Cook until softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin and chili powder, and stir until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes.

Step 3

Add the chipotle pepper and adobo sauce, plus the beef and any juices in the bowl. Use a spoon or potato masher to break up the beef into small pieces. Stir in the tomato sauce and cocoa powder.

Step 4

Cover, reduce heat to low and cook, stirring frequently to avoid scorching, until the beef is tender and the sauce is flavorful, 25 to 30 minutes.

Step 5

Add the beans, including their liquid, and cook, uncovered, stirring often, until the liquid is slightly thickened and the beans are warm, 10 to 15 minutes. Let sit for 5 minutes, then stir in the apple cider vinegar. Taste and add salt until chili is rich and loudly spiced. Eat with desired toppings. Chili keeps for up to 3 days refrigerated; warm over low heat and adjust consistency and seasonings with water, salt, vinegar and chili powder. (Leftovers will keep for up to 4 months if frozen.)

Private Notes

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