

Slow Cooker Chili

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Julia Gartland for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Liza Jernow.

Total Time 4 hours, 30 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (10,010)

A great chili should be richly spiced, with layers of deep, savory flavor. Here, that big flavor comes from the usual contenders, but also from the unexpected additions of unsweetened cocoa, soy sauce and Worcestershire, which provide complexity. This recipe makes a thick, comforting chili that can be prepared in a slow cooker or in a Dutch oven on the stovetop. Chili is perhaps the ideal slow-cooker dish because its flavor improves with a long, slow simmer. This makes a big batch, perfect for a cold-weather get-together, but if you're making it for a smaller group, the leftovers freeze well.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow or red onion, finely chopped
- Kosher salt
- 2 pounds ground beef, 80 percent lean, 20 percent fat
- 8 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika
- 2 teaspoons chipotle powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium. Add the onion, season with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened and translucent, about 8 minutes. Increase the heat to medium-high, add the beef and garlic, season with salt and cook, breaking the beef into crumbles with a spatula, until the beef has lost its pink color, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and cook until slightly darkened and caramelized, about 1 minute. Stir in all the spices and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the beer and stir, scraping the bottom of the pan.

Step 2

Transfer the beef mixture into a 5- to 8-quart slow cooker. Stir in the tomatoes, vinegar, maple syrup, soy sauce, beef bouillon paste, cocoa, beans and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Cover and cook on low for at

2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 teaspoons onion powder
2 teaspoons mustard powder
2 teaspoons hot smoked paprika
½ teaspoon cayenne powder
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
12 ounces (1½ cups) pilsner beer,
such as Modelo Especial
1 (14-ounce) can diced or crushed
tomatoes in juice
¼ cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons maple syrup or dark
brown sugar
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons beef stock bouillon
paste, such as Better Than Bouillon
1½ teaspoons unsweetened cocoa
powder
2 (14-ounce) cans kidney beans,
drained and rinsed
2 (14-ounce) cans pinto beans,
drained and rinsed
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
Hot sauce, grated sharp Cheddar,
sliced scallions, sour cream and
crushed tortilla chips, for serving

least 4 hours and up to 6 hours. (The chili can hold well on warm
for an additional 2 hours.)

Step 3

When ready to serve, stir in the Worcestershire sauce. If the chili
is too thick, stir in a bit of water until the texture is to your liking.
Season to taste with salt. Serve in bowls and pass the toppings at
the table.

TIP

*You can also cook the chili in a Dutch oven on your stovetop in
about 1 hour. In step 2, add 1 cup water instead of ½ cup and let the
mixture come to a simmer over medium-high. (Because the cooking
liquid reduces further on the stovetop, this method starts with
more water.) Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook until the meat
is tender, stirring occasionally, about 35 minutes.*

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