

PORK and BEAN CHILI

Serves 8 to 10.

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from several recipes.

I love chili, especially in winter. I already have two recipes for chili on my web site. I wanted to do an easy and inexpensive meal. After researching many recipes and taking the ingredients I liked best, I wrote this one. The pork shoulder I use is sold at the local warehouse store (Costco) as “boneless country style pork ribs.”



Ingredients:

1 pound (454g) dry beans, pinto, great Northern, or similar variety, soaked overnight in salted water
2 pounds (900g) fresh Roma tomatoes (10 to 12); peeled, seeded, and diced
(or 1 28-oz./794g can tomatoes)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion (8-10 oz./226-284g), chopped
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
4 to 6 tablespoons chili powder (any heat)
2 tablespoons ground cumin
1 tablespoon smoked paprika (optional)
4 to 6 cloves garlic, minced
3 pounds (1.4kg) boneless pork (shoulder), cut into 1-inch (2.5cm) cubes (see explanation above)
1 tablespoon dried oregano flakes
4 cups (1 liter) chicken or beef stock (or water), divided
1 can (6 oz./170g) tomato paste
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

If not already done, pour about 2 quarters of water into a large bowl and add a tablespoon of salt. Stir to dissolve the salt. Then add the beans and let soak 6 to 8 hours, or overnight.

Pour fresh water into a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Cut an ‘X’ into the bottom (opposite the stem end) into each Roma tomato. Pierce the stem end of a tomato with a fork and submerge it in the boiling water for several seconds to release the skin. Then set aside to cool. Continue with all the remaining tomatoes.

Starting from the bottom end where you cut the ‘X’, peel and discard the skin. Cut each tomato in half, through the equator, and use the knife (or squeeze) to remove and discard the seeds. Chop the tomatoes and set aside until needed.

Heat the oil in a large heavy pot, such as an enameled cast iron Dutch oven. Add the chopped onion and sauté until tender and translucent, about 5 minutes.

While the onions are cooking, combine the all-purpose flour, chili, cumin (and optional paprika) in a medium bowl and blend.

Add the minced garlic to the onions and sauté another minute. Add the chopped pork to the pot. Stir and turn the meat until it changes color. Do not brown. Add the oregano and flour mixture. Stir to coat all the meat.

Add 3 cups of stock (or water) and the tomato paste to the pot and bring to a boil, stirring to distribute the tomato paste. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer 2 hours.

Drain and rinse the beans. Add to the pot with the remaining cup of stock. Raise the heat and return to the

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boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, 2 to 3 hours until the beans are tender. (More liquid can be added to the pot if you prefer more soup in your chili.)

Remove from the heat and adjust for salt and pepper. Serve in bowls and garnish with sour cream and/or chopped green onions or chives. Can be cooled and refrigerated. Reheat gently so as not to break up the beans.

STEP-BY-STEP

1

When using dry beans, the recommendation is usually to soak them in water for about 8 hours. Most people simply soak them overnight. According to America's Test Kitchen, soaking the beans in salted water (about a tablespoon of salt per 2 quarts water) tenderizes the skin. There is some science behind that—something about chlorine ions in the salt, etc.—but you might not be interested in all that. It sounds like a good idea; so I do it.

The beans I use most often are the blended variety, which are often available in stores, or you can mix your own varieties.

2

Chop the onion into medium to large pieces. This chili is like a stew. Large pieces of food work well in a stew.

3

Heat the oil in a large pot and sauté the onion until translucent and tender, about 5 to 6 minutes.

4

While the onions are cooking, prepare the tomatoes for peeling by cutting an “X” in the bottom of each tomato. This will help when peeling the tomatoes in a later step.

5



Bring water to a boil in a deep saucepan. Use enough water to completely cover the tomatoes when submerged. Pierce each tomato and hold below the surface of the water for about 15 seconds. This will cook the flesh under the skin, making it easy to remove the skins later.

6



Starting at the “X” at the bottom of each tomato, remove and discard the skin (it should come off easily). Then cut each tomato in half (through the equator). Remove and discard the seeds. Then coarsely chop the tomatoes.

7



Combine the sauce ingredients (flour, chili powder, optional paprika, and cumin) in a bowl.

8



When the onions are tender, add the minced garlic and cook for about a minute.

9



Add the pork meat and cook, turning often, just until the meat changes color on the surface. It does not need to be browned, nor does it need to be cooked all the way through at this stage.

10



Add the flour/spice blend and the oregano. Stir to coat the meat.

11

Add $\frac{3}{4}$ of the stock (about 3 cups) to the pan.

12

Add the chopped tomatoes and tomato paste to the pan.

13

Bring the chili mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan, and simmer for about 2 hours. Stir the pot often to make certain the sauce is not sticking to the bottom and scorching.

14

Here is a trick to help reduce the possibility of scorching in the bottom of the pot. Stack a second stove grate on top of a grate, effectively raising the pot a little higher above the heat.

15



After the initially cooking time, add the beans, return the pot to a boil and simmer an additional 2 to 3 hours, or until the beans are tender.

16



Before serving, taste the chili and season with salt. I like to serve chili with sour cream. I use a portion “disher,” which is like an ice cream scoop, but they come in different sizes. I think a round scoop of sour cream is an attractive enhancement to a bowl of chili.

Conclusion

This chili is relatively easy to make and inexpensive because you can use cheap cuts of pork meat. I enjoy eating chili mostly in winter. A bowl of hot chili is very satisfying on a cold and, especially, rainy day.