

REAL TEXAS CHILI

Makes 8 servings

By Dennis W. Viau

From an old recipe by the late Craig Claiborne.

Everyone who has a recipe for this hot stuff thinks their recipe is the best. Well, there are a lot of good recipes out there and I happen to like this one best. I've been making this chili since my college days and it really satisfies on a cold day. I make it each fall when the weather starts to turn cool. This recipe uses mild chili powder, but feel free to fire it up with hotter chili powder if that is what you like.

“Texas” chili supposedly uses nothing but cubed beef chuck. *Chili con carne* uses chopped or ground beef. *Chili con frijoles* is made with beans. Recipes abound and chili can be found throughout the world. Wikipedia.org says, “The variant recipes provoke disputes among aficionados.” I am not an aficionado and I would never judge a chili cook-off. I just eat.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons (30ml) vegetable oil or olive oil
3 pounds (1.4 kg) boneless beef chuck; cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) cubes
2 to 3 cloves garlic, depending on size; minced or squeezed through a garlic press
4 to 6 tablespoons mild chili powder, hot if you prefer
2 teaspoons ground cumin
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon dried oregano flakes
4 cups (1 liter) beef broth; divided (good beef bouillon is an acceptable substitute)
1 teaspoon salt (no salt if using bouillon, which contains salt)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
Sour cream for garnish when serving

Directions:

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium high heat. Sauté the beef in the oil until it changes color without browning, about 5 minutes. Turn the meat often with a wooden spoon. Stir in the garlic and cook 1 additional minute. Reduce the heat to low.

In a bowl, combine the chili powder, cumin, and flour. Sprinkle over the meat and stir to coat evenly. Crumble the oregano over the meat. Add 3 cups of the broth or your prepared stock and stir to combine.

Add the salt (no salt if using beef bouillon) and pepper, stir to combine. Let simmer, partially covered, for about 90 minutes. Stir occasionally. Add the remaining stock and simmer 30 minutes longer, until the meat begins to fall apart. Can be served immediately, but storing in the refrigerator overnight will improve the flavor.

When reheating, stir carefully over medium-low heat and watch closely to adjust heat, should there be a risk of scorching. Can easily be heated in the microwave.

Serve garnished with a generous dollop of sour cream and include a piece of crusty bread.

This chili freezes well in one-cup servings stored in small ziplock bags in the freezer for later heat-and-eat convenience.

The **Step By Step** guide begins on the following page.



STEP-BY-STEP

1



Measure and assemble your ingredients. When I first started making this chili in my college days, beef broth was only available in cans of about 13½ to 14 ounces each. Now we have the convenience of stock in a box, and we can even buy low-sodium versions.

2



Cook the beef over medium heat until it changes color. Do not brown. Browning sears in the juices, and can also sear “out” other flavors. We want our chili mixture to flavor the meat. When the meat has changed color, add the minced garlic and cook 1 minute, then reduce the heat to low.

3



Combine the chili powder, ground cumin, and flour, in a bowl.

4



Sprinkle the chili powder mixture over the beef and stir to coat everything evenly. Add the oregano and stir again.

5



Add about 3 cups of the beef broth, or beef stock if you made your own, along with the salt and pepper (no salt if using bouillon). Stir to combine. Partially cover the pot with its lid and allow to simmer on low heat for 1½ hours, stirring occasionally. Add the remaining stock and simmer another 30 minutes.

6



Here is a bowl of finished chili, ready to eat. I prefer to add salt, if needed, at the end of the cooking time. Refrigerating the chili overnight will ripen the flavor for a better tasting bowl of chili, if you can resist digging in and eating it all right away.