

Texas T's Everything but the Kitchen Sink Six-Pack Chili



Chili! I'm not going to get into any hot debate on what it is, or what it should be, other than to say it is whatever whomever is cooking it believes it should be :-)

With beans... without beans. Tomato based.... Not tomato based. Spice it up! Tone it down. Crackers?... No crackers. Macaroni?... No macaroni. Toss in some cheese... Don't toss in the cheese? Extra onions?... Stay away from the onions...

How about the meat? Or maybe meatless! Should I use Beef?... Pork?... Veal...? Chicken?... Turkey?... Venison?... Lamb?... Tofu?... Go Vegan?

To all of this, I say sure! Why not! If there is a basic food group (Chili is considered a basic food group in Texas...) that just begs to be done your way, it has to be Chili!

This is a recipe I have literally developed over the course of 45 years or so. My mom would occasionally make her version of Midwestern Style Chili. It was rather thin and bland by Texas Standards, but we loved it. Later (1969) when I attended school in Louisville Kentucky my friends and I discovered Chili Mac at a local pharmacy lunch counter. Mid-seventies and I was given a Marlboro Chili Recipe Book with ten different Chili recipes and it grew to a modest obsession from there!

What follows may be my take on Chili, but I say experiment and make it your own. Once you make that perfect pot/pan of Chili please send me pictures! And, if willing to share, the recipe!

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The title basically says it all! Normally Texas Chili Purists would never put beans in their Chili! But I say ***Pisshaw To That Yaw!!!*** I like Beans so in they go along with everything else! If you are on a low carb diet you can skip the beans.... I guess... :-0

Now, just a quick note on what is meant by the notion of “Six-Pack Chili!” I didn’t invent this idea, but I am certainly happy I found reference to it, and then appropriated it! As it was explained to me you should purchase a six pack of beer (a nice Mexican or Texas Lager please...), use two beers in the making of the Chili... and then drink the other four! Perfect!

This Chili will cook all day so start in the morning. After cooking it all day let it cool down and stick it in the fridge overnight and then start on it again around noon or at least four hours before dinner the following day. You will thank me for this! Promise!

So, your timeline should look something like this.

Day 0 - If cooking the beans yourself rather than just dumping them from a can you should soak any dried beans overnight. That would be the day before Chili Cooking Day

Day 1 – Start your day by putting the beans on to cook in the morning. Around High Noon, or earlier, start cooking that Chili!

Day 2 – Dinner Day! Again, around High Noon, or at least four hours before dinner, continue cooking the Chili. Warming it up slowly to a soft boil then reduce to a low/slow simmer. Stirring frequently continue to simmer right up to serving. Do a “Tiny Taste Test” and add whatever is needed.

Get your “Fixins” ready and bake your Cornbread (if you are doing that!). If you are doing a dessert, its time to “get er done” as well!

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Chili always tastes better when enjoyed in convivial surroundings and shared with friends! Make sure there's beer or other adult beverages in the fridge in sufficient quantities for your guests. When it's all ready and the guests have arrived "*Ring that Dinner Bell!!*" and enjoy!



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Gettin' it All Together

Gather all of your equipment and ingredients together in one place before getting started.

Equipment

Slow cooker or large pot for the beans (if cooking yourself)
Large stainless steel or well-tempered cast iron skillet
Extra Large Chili Pot (something within reason of course :-)
Cutting Board and Knife
Spoons/Spatulas/Whatever utensils you cook with

Ingredients

2 Medium red onions roughly chopped
2lb nice fatty ground Pork

Note: 1lb ground Veal or ground Lamb can be substituted for 1lb of the Pork but please leave it a total of 4lbs total. If you are (overly) fond of poultry meat like Turkey or Chicken then, by all means, use that. If you are mixing either Pork/Beef with your poultry meat, then cook them separately and make sure the poultry meat is very thoroughly cooked before combining.

2lb grass fed ground beef (or coarsely ground Chili Beef works great as well)
4 to 6 tbls of extra virgin olive oil for the frying - adjust as required

2 heads of garlic roughly chopped
2 Jalapenos – roasted and steamed (to remove skins) then minced

1 - 6oz can of Tomato Paste (I prefer Contadina)
2 – 15.5oz cans of Diced Tomatoes (I prefer *Hunt's Diced Tomatoes NO SALT ADDED and 0 ADDED SUGARS* or *Hunt's Diced Fire Roasted Garlic Diced Tomatoes* if the no salt version can't be found)
2 – 15.5oz cans of Tomato Sauce (I prefer *Hunt's Tomato Sauce NO SALT ADDED with 0 ADDED SUGARS*)

Note: With canned Tomato products I suggest you go with the No Salt/Low Sodium and "No Added Sugars" versions whenever possible. You are, of course, free to make your own Tomato Sauce, Diced Tomatoes, or Tomato Paste to control the salt and sugar. If you are up for it and have the time that is!

1 TBLS Oregano (either dried or 2 TBLS of fresh will work)
2 tsp of ground Cumin
1 tsp of Chipotle (or smoked Ancho) Pepper Powder
10 TBLS Gebhardt's or McCormick's Chili Powder (adjust to taste!)
4 TBLS Penzeys Chili 9000 Chili Powder – *Yes, I use two kinds of Chili Powders!* (adjust to taste)
1 TBLS or Old Bay Seasoning (if you have it around)
4 bay leaves
A few splashes of Red Pepper Sauce (Frank's Redhot works well)

Kosher Salt to taste (probably about 1 or 2 teaspoons added over the different stages of the cooking)
1 tsp of freshly ground black pepper

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If using DRIED BEANS:

½ lb Red Kidney Beans
½ lb Black Beans
½ lb Pinto or Navy Beans

Note: 1 ½ pounds of dried beans will make A LOT OF BEANS when re-hydrated and cooked! Adjust accordingly!

If using CANNED BEANS:

2 cans Bush's Chili Beans or Kidney Beans
2 cans Black Beans
2 cans Navy Beans

1 can White Hominy
1 can Golden Hominy

Note: When I select the beans and Hominy listed above, I always try to get the "No Salt Added" and "No Added Sugars" versions whenever possible. The best alternative to canned, when time permits, is to cook dried beans (Red, Black, and White) with a chunk of fatback tossed in and minimal seasoning. Just keep in mind that cooking dried beans will add another day to the cooking schedule.

2 – 12oz Lager Beers – Use a good Mexican Lager (Corona, Modelo, Dos Equis) or a good ol' Texas lager like Shiner (Spoetzel Brewing) or even "The National Beer of Texas," Lone Star (Miller Brewing), will work just fine. If I'm being completely honest any decent Lager will do!

Cookin' It Up!

Let's start the cooking process. If using dried beans start the night before and soak the beans overnight. Start cooking the beans the morning of the day you start the Chili cooking process. If using canned beans keep those beans sealed in the cans until later.

Dry Beans Method:

1. Wash and pick through the beans
2. Soak the dried beans overnight or longer in a large pan or bowl adding water until the beans are covered by at least two inches of water.

NOTE: If using RED KIDNEY BEANS process and soak them separately from the other bean varieties!

3. ***Drain beans still keeping any RED KIDNEY BEANS separate. Place RED KIDNEY BEANS in a pot and cover with fresh water and boil for ten minutes, drain and rinse.***
4. Whether using a slow cooker (crock pot) or just a big pot on the stove you can now dump all of the beans into the same pot. I like to use a **Slow Cooker** as I can be doing other stuff while the beans are actually cooking.
5. Cover the beans with 2 inches of water and turn set the slow cooker or burner to high heat.
6. Toss in ½ of a rough chopped onion, four smashed cloves of garlic, 1 TBLS of Chili Powder, 1 tsp of dried Oregano, 1 tsp Salt, 1 tsp Black Pepper, 1 or two bay leaves and give it a couple of stirs.

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7. If using a Slow Cooker cover and cook on High for about 6 – 8 Hours. Stir every two hours or so. Check for desired softness at about 6 hours.
8. If using the Stove-Top Pot method bring to a boil, then reduce to a slow simmer. Cover pot stirring every hour or so. Start checking for the right tenderness at 3 hours in and then adjust your cooking time accordingly.

You want to cook your beans until soft but still firm to the bite but never mushy!

The Chili:

1. If you have gas burners on your stove roast the Jalapenos over the open burner while rotating until the skin of the Jalapeno is charred and black. Toss the charred peppers into a plastic bag and seal the bag. The steam escaping from the peppers will soften the skin. Set the bag aside.



2. Remove the peppers from the bag and slip/wash the charred skins from the peppers. Split the peppers discarding the stem, internal membrane and the seeds. Mince the peppers and add to the chopped Onions. If you are the sensitive sort wear gloves when handling the Jalapenos.
3. Do a rough chop on the Onions and set aside. Do a rough chop on the Garlic and set aside.



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4. Pour the Olive Oil into a large skillet/sauté pan and heat over a medium high heat.
5. When the oil just starts to smoke dump the chopped Red Onions and the minced Jalapenos into the pan and sauté. Add a pinch of Salt and Black Pepper and sauté until they soften and go translucent, usually about 4 to 5 minutes.



6. Using a slotted spoon transfer *MOST* of the Onions/Peppers to the Chili Pot.
7. Start browning the ground Pork by breaking it up and stirring for a couple of minutes before adding the broken-up ground Beef and cook over medium high heat. Season the Pork and Beef mixture lightly with Salt and Pepper and cook until mostly done.
8. Dump the chopped Garlic into the meat mixture and give it a couple of quick stirs to incorporate and continue cooking.
9. When cooked through, pull the meat to the side of the pan using a spoon or spatula. The remaining oil should creep over the cleared spot in the pan.
10. Spoon the Tomato Paste into the open area and fry/sauté in the Olive Oil while constantly stirring to keep it from burning. While cooking the paste it should turn a deep, dark brick red. When it becomes that dark red color, gradually start to incorporate the meat into the Tomato Paste.
11. Once the meat and tomato paste are combined, stir in 2 tbsp of the Chili Powder into the meat mixture and stir quickly couple of times and then remove from the heat.
12. Carefully dump or spoon the meat mixture into the Chili Pot with the Onions and stir it up.
13. Turn on the heat under the Chili Pot to Medium High.
14. Pour the Diced Tomatoes and the Tomato Sauce into the meat and onion mixture and stir.
15. Pour 1 (ONE) of the 12 oz beers into the pot slowly and stir.
16. If more liquid is needed or desired just add some water.
17. In no particular order add the Oregano, Ground Cumin, Chipotle Pepper Powder, Chili Powder #1, Chili Powder #2 (if using), Old Bay Seasoning, the Bay Leaves, a few splashes of the Red Pepper Sauce and then stir, stir, stir, until well blended.
18. Make a "Tiny Taste Test." Nothing will be particularly balanced at this point, but you should be able to determine if more Chili Powder or additional Salt is needed. Chili Powder is nice and fragrant so getting a good whiff can be a pretty revealing test. If your nose hairs light up, then maybe too much spice was used... If it smells as if you are in the ballpark and no lasting

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damage was done to your upper respiratory tract then you should be golden. If too much heat don't despair!... We still have the other ingredients to add later and that will cut the heat back a bit.

19. Let the Chili come up to a soft boil and then reduce the heat to obtain a slow/low simmer. Cover the pot and let it cook for 3 to 4 hours stirring occasionally to ensure nothing is sticking to the bottom.
20. Now would be a good time to crack open one of your remaining five beers and chill for a while. If you are cooking the beans rather than dumping them from the can you can check on the progress of that as well.
21. After possibly consuming two more beers and three to four hours of cooking it's time to add the beans and Hominy. ***If your dried beans are ready drain them and add the solids to the Chili Pot. If not ready just keep cooling until they are ready.***

If using the canned stuff open all of the cans and dump into a strainer over a sink to remove the excess liquid. Then transfer all of the beans and Hominy to the Chili Pot.

22. Time to add the second beer to the Chili Pot! Now, of course, is the time when you will find out if your Chili Pot is actually big enough. Be Careful!
23. Increase the heat and bring the Chili back to a soft boil. Reduce the heat to a slow/low simmer and cover. Stirring frequently, simmer for 1.5 hours. Turn off and remove from the heat and allow to cool. When sufficiently cooled, place in the refrigerator. Be sure to place on thick potholders if on a glass shelf. Allow to chill overnight.
24. The next day (Dinner Day) remove from the fridge about four hours before your scheduled serving time and slowly bring to a soft boil stirring frequently. Then reduce the heat and hold at a slow/low simmer with the lid off until ready to serve. If not as thick as you would like, dump some Cornstarch or Potato Starch slurry into the Chili and allow it to thicken slightly.
25. Get your "Fixins", Cornbread, and the desert if serving, ready. Now is a good time to finish off any of the six-pack that might be left if the significant other is not looking :-)

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The "Fixins!"

Yes, I said it! The **"Fixins!"** Or, if not from the South (I wasn't born in Texas, but I got here as soon as I could :-), in other words the sides and condiments.

Here is what I will sit on the table when serving Chili to my guests.

1. Crackers – I like Kellogg's (previously Kebler) Club Crackers
2. Pile O' Grated Cheese – Usually a nice, shredded Monterrey-Jack...
3. Additional Onions – Chopped
4. Macaroni (Cooked of course! :-)
5. That bottle of Franks Redhot Sauce (You can put that S**t on everything! ;-)
6. Beers or whatever to order...

And a pile of Honey Cornbread or Honey Jalapeno Cornbread (recipe follows...)

Honey Cornbread/Honey Jalapeno Cornbread

Nothing goes better with Chili than a mess O' Cornbread! In my opinion of course!



When I make Cornbread, I like to make muffins for a trio of reasons. First, a regular sized muffin is a reasonable sized portion. Second, it minimizes the Kitchen/Serving mess. And Third, as muffins they are easier to heat up if they go cold whilst you are puttering around in eighteen different directions!

If you prefer using a baking dish go right ahead... Just remember to slather butter or oil on the bottom and sides before pouring the batter into the baking dish!

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Get it All Together and Prep

Gather all of your needed equipment, utensils and ingredients in place.

Special Equipment Materials Needed

- 12-Cup Muffin Baking Tin
- 12 - Paper Muffin Cups (heavier material is better)

Equipment

- 1 – Large Stainless Steel Mixing Bowl
- 2 – Medium Stainless Steel Mixing Bowls
- 1 – Microwave-Safe Soup Bowl or Small Saucepan for Melting the Butter
- 1 - Hand Whisk or Hand-Mixer with Whisk Attachment
- 1 – Wooden Spoon for Mixing and Folding
- 1 – Baking Sheet (that the Muffin Baking Tin will comfortably sit on)
- 1 – Silpat or Three Layers of Parchment Paper (under the Muffin Tin)

Ingredients

- 1 ¼ cup of quality Yellow Cornmeal
- ¾ cup of All-Purpose Flour
- 1 Heaped TBLS of Baking Powder
- ½ cup of Granulated Sugar
- 1 Scant tsp of Salt
- 1 cup of Whole Milk (depending on your Cornmeal and Flour you may have to go with slightly more)
- 3 Large (or 4 Small) Eggs – Separated
- 1 – Stick of REAL BUTTER (Unsalted)
- ¼ (Plus) cup of Honey

Optional

If you want to prepare Honey Jalapeno Cornbread, then prepare and mince 1 or 2 Jalapenos in the same way as detailed in the Chili Recipe and stir them into the cornbread mixture before filling the muffin/cupcake tins. If you are making muffins cut some Jalapeno Rounds and place on top of the Cornbread Muffins as a garnish! Or! Make half the muffins regular and then mix the minced Jalapenos into the remaining batter before filling the remaining cups!

Making the Muffins!

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F
2. Melt the butter in the Microwave-Safe bowl or melt it slowly in a small saucepan. If using the microwave use a low-power setting (I use 3 on mine) and cover the bowl loosely with wax or parchment paper to avoid, or limit, the dreaded “Buttery Microwave” effect (exploding butter). Slow stovetop melting is the safer option! Let it cool a bit.
3. In the large bowl mix the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt and whisk until well combined.
4. In one of the medium bowls whisk together the whole milk, EGG YOLKS, melted butter and the honey. Rinse the whisk or use another whisk for the next step.
5. In the other medium bowl rapidly whisk the EGG WHITES until you obtain stiff peaks.
6. Add the wet to the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Avoid over mixing!

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7. Slowly and gently fold the fluffed egg whites into the other ingredients until just combined. It's OK if there are still some streaks in the batter.
8. Spoon or use a measuring cup to fill the muffin cups about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. If you have left over batter just fill some small, buttered Ramekins or hold until the first batch is finished and bake another group as needed.
9. Place the Silpat or Parchment Paper layers on the baking sheet and the Muffin Tin on top of that.
10. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 15 minutes or until a chopstick or toothpick comes out clean after inserted into the center of a muffin.
11. Serve the Cornbread Muffins with butter. Or even better, make some Honey Butter and sit on the table. For Honey Butter just mix 3 TBSP of Honey with 1 stick (8 TBSP) of SOFTENED Butter. Put the Butter and Honey mixture on a piece of plastic wrap, close it up and spin it to make a sausage-like tube. Toss that in the fridge for a couple of hours and it will set back up like a stick of butter!

If your muffins get cold waiting on service, just pop them in the microwave for 15 – 20 seconds on high to rewarm or place them covered in a warm oven for a short while.

CHILI!

While all of this may seem like a lot to go through for plain old chili it's not! Most importantly, it's *just NOT* plain old chili at this point.... It's **CHILI!!**

This will make a large batch of Chili. If you have lots left over it can safely be frozen in freezer safe containers or bags. Remove as much of the air as possible before freezing!

Give it a try and let me know what you think. If you have a special Chili recipe lets share! After all.... There can never be too many Chili recipes!