



A bowl of hot chili is good on so many levels. It's healthy comfort food at its best. This version is robust, but not spicy. That might surprise people who know me! I decided to write a recipe that lots of people would enjoy, and if you like your chili HOT, like I do, just add Tabasco at the end. We serve our chili with homemade jalapeno cornbread.

Chili My Way

Chili My Way is based on a family recipe, but it's twisted. I suppose that's fitting.

Ingredients

1.25 pounds ground sirloin (any amount between 1.0-1.5 pounds works)

2 Tablespoons canola oil

30 oz of canned red kidney beans (not drained)

28 oz of crushed tomatoes

½ of an onion (yellow or red), diced

1 big stalk of celery, diced

½ of a large jalapeno or Serrano pepper, minced, ribs & seeds removed (optional)

½ of a medium sized green bell pepper, diced

Salt and pepper to taste

1.5 Tablespoons chili powder

1 large chipotle chile in adobo, minced, with 1 Tablespoon of the adobo sauce

2 teaspoons ground cumin

¼ cup water or dry white wine

Juice of 1 lime

Optional

Tabasco (or your favorite hot sauce)

Shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Sliced scallions

Corn chips

Sour cream or Greek yogurt

In a Dutch oven, warm the canola oil over medium high heat. Then add the ground sirloin, plus a good pinch of salt and pepper. Use a wooden spoon to break up the meat a bit, but basically let it sit and get really brown on the first side, before you flip it onto the other side. You want the meat to look dark brown, not gray!

Remove the meat from the Dutch oven and set aside. You should have juices and brown crud in the pan. If your pan is very dry, add another tablespoon of canola oil.

Add your diced onion, celery, bell pepper, jalapeno/Serrano, and chipotle/adobo and a pinch of salt, and let that sweat for about 3 minutes. It will (eventually) cook for a long time, so don't worry about it getting soft at this stage.

Add the cumin and the chili powder. Give everything a good stir for 1 minute. Then deglaze the Dutch oven or pot with the water or white wine. Scrape up all of those brown bits on the bottom and side of the pot.

Add the crushed tomatoes and the liquid from one can of beans (or half a can if you're using one big can). Reserve any leftover bean juice, and the beans. We'll use that later!

Give it a stir to mix everything well, and let it simmer on low for at least an hour. Anywhere from 60-90 minutes is good. Taste for salt and pepper. Add a pinch of salt if you wish. Stir occasionally.

Leave the lid to the pot slightly askew while the meat / tomatoes simmer.

After 60-90 minutes, add any remaining bean juice and beans. At this point, all of your ingredients are in the pot (except for the lime juice...).

Simmer for another 60-90 minutes, or longer. Serve immediately, or cool completely before refrigerating. Reheat on your stovetop, slowly, over medium low heat so you don't burn the chili.

If you let the chili simmer for a long time (like 3-4 hours), the flavors deepen. You might need to add ½ cup of water (once or twice) if your chili gets too thick while it's simmering. That's totally up to you, depending on how thick you want the chili.

When ready to serve, squeeze the juice of a lime over the chili, and stir.

Garnish with sour cream or Greek yogurt, sharp cheddar cheese, sliced scallions, and /or crushed corn chips. Add hot sauces to your taste.

Notes: You can cook bacon into the chili. Cook it separately and add when you put the tomatoes into the chili. Pickled jalapenos would be a great garnish. One-half cup of frozen or fresh corn would be a nice addition. If you don't like kidney beans, use a mix of black beans and white beans – any beans will work as long as you use about 30 ounces total. If you use dried beans, be sure to soak them overnight, before cooking.

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