

COOKING ON DEADLINE:

Texas Red Chili

By Katie Workman

If you know anything about Texas chili, then you know for certain the one thing that is NOT in this recipe. If you have just yelled “BEANS!”, then you are correct (and you knew you were correct and did not need me to tell you, thank you very much). If you did not know that the chili in Texas never, ever contains beans, then you have not discussed chili with a Texan. Or, for that matter, with someone with strong opinions on the other side, who thinks beans are an integral part of chili and that Texas chili is well more like a stew.

Wait, stop, put down those pitchforks! I didn’t say it was a stew, just that I have read that other folks from other parts of the country have said such things. I think it’s chili! Really, I do! (I also think chilies with beans are also chili). Look, I’m not here to solve the great chili debate. I do know that the guys in my family

love all kinds of chili, but are happiest when it is at its meatiest. And Texas chili, also known as a “Bowl of Red,” is meaty all right.

Cook this chili low and slow so the meat can become very soft and the liquid thickens into a sauce, and doesn’t just evaporate. The sauce that binds this chili together is thick - if it gets too thick, stir in 1/2 to 1 cup water toward the end, especially if it starts to stick to the bottom of the pot. I also like to shred some of the big cubes of super-tender beef at the end to give the sauce more texture. We eat our Texas Red Chili over rice with what I think of as traditional chili toppings - cheese, sour cream, avocado - which I gather are also acceptable toppings in Texas.



TEXAS RED CHILI

Ingredients

Servings 6-8

Start to finish: 4 hours

3 pounds cubed (1 to 1 1/2-inch) stew meat, such as beef chuck
 1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil
 2 red or yellow onions, chopped (about 2 cups)
 5 garlic cloves, minced
 1/4 cup chili powder
 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes or tomato puree
 3 cups less-sodium beef broth, plus more as needed

Preparation

Season the beef with salt and pepper. In a large soup pot, or a Dutch oven, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium high heat. Add the beef in batches and brown a few sides, about 8 minutes per batch (not every side has to be browned; it’s better to caramelize a few sides well and let the rest just be). Add more oil between batches as needed. Transfer the meat with a slotted spoon to a plate as it finishes browning.

Drain off all but 1 tablespoon of the fat from the pot, if needed, and add the onions. Saute them over medium heat for 5 minutes, until the onions are tender. Add the garlic and saute for one more minute, until you can smell the garlic. Add the chili powder, give

it a stir, then stir in the crushed tomatoes and the beef broth. Return the browned beef cubes to the pot and bring to a simmer over medium high heat.

Reduce the heat and simmer very gently, partially covered, for about 3 hours, until the beef is very tender. Add 1/2 to 1 cup of water toward the end if the sauce is too thick or the mixture looks too dry. When it is all tender, you can remove a cup or two of the beef cubes and shred them with two forks, then stir that back into the pot to thicken up the sauce a bit, if desired. Serve hot over rice in bowls, with the accompaniments of your choice.