



Chili con Carne

My most requested and shared recipe. The original is from the Time Life series of cookbooks published in the 1970s. The picture is of Trey's version for a tailgate before a Jets game...it was a rainy Sunday and his chili was probably the perfect choice!

Ingredients

3 pounds top round, cut into 1/2 inch cubes OR same amount of coarsely ground chopped meat
6 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cups coarsely chopped onion
2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
4 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
6 ounces tomato paste
4 cups beef stock, fresh or canned (I use Campbell's beef broth)
freshly ground pepper
1 1/2 cups freshly cooked red kidney beans or drained and rinsed canned kidney beans

Procedure

Pat the meat dry with paper towels. Then, in a 12-inch skillet, heat 4 tablespoons of the oil until a light haze forms above it. Add the meat and cook over high heat for 2-3 minutes, stirring until the meat is lightly browned. (Since you don't want to crowd the meat, which would minimize browning, please brown in batches.) With a slotted spoon transfer the meat to a 4-quart heavy flameproof casserole. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the skillet and in it cook the onion and garlic for 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently.

Remove the skillet from the heat, add the 4 tablespoons chili powder, oregano, cumin and red paper flakes and stir until the onions are well coated with the mixture. Add and blend in the tomato paste, then 2 cups of the beef stock. Simmer on low heat for 5-10 minutes.

The original recipe did not call for this last 5-10 minutes of simmer. I do it because the flavors blend better and the perfume of the chili flows throughout the house in an instant.

Add the mixture in the skillet to the meat in the casserole. Add a few grindings of fresh pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring once or twice, then half cover the pot, turn the heat to low and simmer for 1 to 1 1/2 hours or until the meat is tender.

If you plan to use the beans, add them to the casserole 15 minutes or so before the meat is done or, if you prefer, serve separately at the table. In either case, skin the chili of as much of the surface fat as you can. If the chili is refrigerated overnight, the fat will rise to the surface and can more easily be skimmed-off before reheating.