Best Ever Game Time Chili

When you think fusion, you think of the merging of far-flung cuisines and concepts. But one of the best fusion dishes involves all American elements: Chili melds native North American cuisine, chuck-wagon fare, personal taste and pure circumstance. Loaded with chilies (a.k.a. flavor) and chunky beef, this can be served with cornbread, rice or the snackiest corn chips or tortillas you can find. If you're a purist, lose the beans and substitute with more meat. Like most stews and braises, this dish develops deeper flavors as it sits, so it's an ideal dish to make a day or two ahead.

See Cook's Note on how to cut jalapenos with minimal handling of seeds.

Ingredients

chili
Vegetable oil
2½ pounds beef chuck or boneless short rib, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 ounces Spanish-style chorizo, chopped
10 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
4 poblanos, stems and pods removed, seeded (optional), and diced
4 jalapenos, stems removed, seeded (optional), and diced
1 large Spanish onion, chopped
2 tablespoons ancho chile powder
1½ tablespoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Mexican
2 tablespoons minced chipotle peppers in adobo, plus 1 tablespoon adobo sauce
3 (14.5-ounce) cans canned whole tomatoes in tomato juice or puree
2 (15-ounce) cans small red beans, kidney beans or pinto beans, rinsed and drained
1 (12-ounce) bottle beer
1 tablespoon light brown sugar

serving
Sour cream
Shredded sharp cheddar, Monterey jack, and/or pepperjack
Cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped
Diced red onions or sliced scallions
Corn chips, tortilla chips, corn bread or rice

Directions

for the chili

Heat a large Dutch oven or other wide, heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil to the pot. Pat beef dry and generously season with salt and pepper. Working in batches to avoid crowding pan, sear the beef until nicely browned on all sides and transfer to a large bowl as done, 4 to 5 minutes per batch, adding more oil as needed. Reduce heat to medium and add the chorizo to the pot; cook, stirring, until lightly golden on edges and some nice, red fat renders out, about 3 minutes, then transfer with a slotted spoon to the bowl of beef.

Discard all but 2 tablespoons of the fat remaining in the pot, or add more oil to yield 2 tablespoons. Add the garlic, poblanos, jalapenos, onions and a pinch of salt to the pot, stirring and scraping the brown bits at the bottom of the pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions and chiles are very soft, about 15 minutes. Add the ancho chile powder, cumin and oregano, crumbling the oregano as it goes into the pot, and stir constantly for a minute. Add the chipotle pepper with adobo and the tomatoes, crushing them with your hands as you put them in the pot (or just plop the tomatoes in and mash them with a potato masher), half of the beans, the beer, sugar, beef, chorizo and any juices that accumulated in the bowl. Stir together and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer. Cook, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until beef is tender, about 2½ hours. Add the remaining beans and warm through. Taste, and adjust the seasonings.

for serving

Serve chili with the sour cream, cheese, cilantro and scallions or red onions.

Cook's Note

To cut jalapenos with minimal handling of the seeds, cut off the stem side of the jalapeno so it's somewhat stable when you stand the jalapeno up on the cutting board. Hold the jalapeno upright and slice off one side of the jalapeno from top to bottom without cutting into the seeds. Rotate the jalapeno and repeat until all the sides are cut off and all that is left is the core of seeds and strips of jalapeno. Chop the strips to your desired size.

total time: About 3 hours 45 minutes
active prep: 1 hour 15 minutes
serves: 8 to 10 (makes 12 cups)
difficulty: moderate