

Ray's 'High Voltage' A/C Chili

...known to fully satisfied eaters on 3 continents as 'Chili of the Gods'
Winner in two categories at the 'Great 2017 UW Genome Sciences Chili Cook-off' !

Notes: Chili is a wonderful, seemingly simple dish that evokes strong emotion and opinion – not unlike barbeque. The key to any good chili are the peppers. The 'A/C's' in this recipe are fresh, whole-roasted ancho (A) and chipotle (C) chiles that give great flavor and 'heat'. You can use ground beef for this recipe, but it's much better with beef chunks slow-cooked for 3-4 hours until they melt and take up the flavors. A very satisfying vegetarian chili can also be made by supplementing with additional bean types. Real flavor develops with cooking time, so don't rush the prep: you'll be richly – and warmly – rewarded. Enjoy!

The Protocol (scales well, so don't be shy about expanding on the basics below...)

1. get good dried whole-roasted chile peppers and steep them in a little boiling water to soften. Note: DO NOT handle chilies with bare hands - these suckers are VERY 'hot' even when dry!
2. chop 1-2 medium onions and 3-4 large cloves of garlic and melt in a little butter in a large casserole pan, then reserve when done.
3. brown your beef (~1 lb of either ground beef or beef cut into chunks - beef roasts work well for this - if you cook the requisite 3 - 4 hours, any cut will work) in the same pan.
4. fine chop and add 1-2 stalks of celery, 1 red and 1 yellow pepper, and 2 carrots.
5. drain and rinse well 2 x 16 oz cans of black beans and 1 or 2 x 16 oz cans of garbanzo beans, and add together with 1 large can (24 oz or so) of chopped tomatoes. My vegetarian version uses black and pinto beans in addition to more garbanzos/chickpeas.
6. add water to top up and start cooking over moderate heat.
7. open and de-vein your now-softened chiles, remove all of the seeds, and then coarse-chop and add. Use 2-3 chipotle (C) and 1-2 ancho (A) chiles for medium 'heat' and great flavor (again, DON'T DO THIS WITH BARE HANDS!). Reserve steeping liquid for addition later.
8. add a little salt and pepper, plus water if needed to cover the mix and simmer open over moderate heat, stirring every few minutes to make sure nothing is sticking as things slowly concentrate down.
9. check seasoning and add more salt, pepper and chile mix or chile steeping broth to taste.
10. serve with the following mix of 'chili toppers' along with corn bread, butter, honey and beer. Jalapeno or jalapeno/bacon cornbread is a great match:

sour creme
cilantro
lime wedges

grated sharp or extra-sharp cheddar
pan-toasted pepitas (raw pumpkin seeds) - toss
with a little soy sauce to finish

Make, enjoy and improve this recipe, then pass it on - the current version is in use on at least 3 continents, and is never better than when it's shared.

'The thing to remember in cooking chili is that any fool can make food hotter than a baker's belt buckle simply by adding more spices. In order to work it's soul-satisfying magic, chili must be hot enough to make you tingle head-to-toe, but it shouldn't be... [so hot it's inedible]'

- from historian of the West Frederick Turner's essay 'A Lot Like It Hot'