

Homemade Thick Chili (Hearty, Rich, and Never Watery)

If you've ever made chili that tasted good but looked like

TIME
5 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef (85/15)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional, to balance acidity)

DIRECTIONS

1. Soften the veggies. Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and bell pepper; cook 4-5 minutes until softened.
2. Brown the beef. Add ground beef and cook 6-8 minutes, breaking it up, until fully browned. Drain excess grease if needed.
3. Build depth. Stir in garlic and tomato paste; cook 1 minute to deepen flavor.
4. Bloom spices. Add chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, oregano, salt, pepper, and cayenne (if using). Cook 30 seconds while stirring.
5. Add the rest. Stir in crushed tomatoes, drained diced tomatoes, beans, beef broth, and sugar (if using).
6. Simmer uncovered. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook 30-35 minutes, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until thick and rich. If it gets too thick, add a splash more broth.
7. Rest for max thickness. Taste and adjust seasoning. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

SWAPS & NOTES

Meat options: Ground turkey works, but beef gives the richest chili.

If using lean meat, add an extra drizzle of oil for body.

Bean swaps: Pinto beans are great here if that's what you have.

Heat control: Keep it mild by skipping cayenne.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use a wide pot: A Dutch oven helps evaporation happen faster, which means thicker chili.

Simmer gently: Too hard of a boil can scorch the bottom before it reduces properly.

Drain diced tomatoes: This is a sneaky trick for avoiding watery chili.

Rest before serving: Five minutes makes a noticeable difference in texture.

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Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/homemade-thick-chili-hearty-rich-and-never-watery/>