

It may be the official state food, but the recipes and styles are as varied as the Texas landscape. After judging several of the larger chili cook-offs, we learned some of the unwritten rules of chili cooking etiquette: Never use beans of any kind. Drink 6 beers for every one that goes in the chile. And never use ground meat, it must be cubed.

The truth is that on a wet, cold Texas winter day nothin' tastes better than a bowl of "Texas Red." The following recipe is one that uses Texas venison and wild boar along with some of our favorite "secret" ingredients... good veal stock and ancho chilies!!!!



WILD GAME CHILI

- 2 poblano chilies
- 6 ancho chilies
- ½ lb. bacon, ground
- 1 lb. venison, ¼" cube (hindquarter is the best)
- 1 lb. wild boar, ¼" cube (hindquarter is the best)
- 2 lbs. yellow onions, ¼" dice
- ½ cup garlic, minced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 2 cups tomatoes, ¼" dice
- 2 cups veal stock
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons cumin
- ¼ cup chili powder
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 teaspoons cayenne (diced jalapeño or serrano peppers are a great substitute for dry cayenne)

Blister skin from poblanos, peel, then remove seeds and ribs. Cut into ¼" dice.

Remove seeds from ancho chilies. Soak in half cup water to soften about 10 minutes. Purée in blender with a little veal stock. Set aside.

Render the fat from the bacon and reserve the cooked bacon and the drippings.

Clean all the venison and wild boar free of connective tissue and silverskin, and with a sharp knife cube into ¼" pieces.

Next, brown the meat in small batches using high heat, a large heavy pot or skillet and several tablespoons of bacon drippings. By cooking in small batches you will sear and brown the meat quickly. This will give you the proper texture and color-rich brown, not gray.

Remove the meat and set aside while you sauté the onions, garlic, celery, and poblanos in the same pot used for the meat. Add bacon drippings as needed.

Add the cooked bacon, then the tomatoes, veal stock, lemon juice and zest, brown sugar, cumin, chili powder and puréed anchos.

Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Add the browned meat and simmer slowly for 45 minutes to an hour, adding a little beer or water as it becomes too thick.

Toppings vary from salsa to grated cheese, goat cheese or flavored sour creams. We are partial to our Tomatillo White Chocolate Sauce as a topper.

BROWN VEAL STOCK

Yield: 1 gallon

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 8 lbs. veal bones, browned (we use lots of wild game bones, as well)
- 1 lb. mirepoix, browned-50% onion chopped; 25% celery, chopped; 25% carrots, chopped
- 2-3 oz. tomato paste
- 4 cloves garlic, whole
- 1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cups burgundy
- 6 quarts water

Preheat oven to 400°

Place bones in a single layer in a large pre-heated pan with ½ cup of oil. Roast 2 hours.

Add mirepoix and tomato paste in the last twenty minutes to caramelize.

Transfer all to stock pot and deglaze pan with burgundy.

Scrape fond (the brown bits stuck to the bottom) from roasting pan and add to stock pot.

Cover everything in stock pot with cold water and bring to a boil.

Reduce to a simmer.

Skim scum periodically.

Simmer six hours, adding more water to cover bones as needed.

Strain and refrigerate or cool.

If you want deeper, richer stock, keep simmering, but do not reduce over 50% more.

WILD GAME CHILI

Serves 10-12

VARIATION:

Hunters, this is the recipe to clean out the wild game freezer. Use it all - elk, moose, bear, all kinds of antelope. We refrain from using game sausage, but if you must-you must.

TOOLS:

8-Quart Heavy-bottom Stock Pot

Blender

Zester

TIMING:

The chili recipe can be made a day or two ahead of time ... it just gets better in the refrigerator.