

# Chili Recipe

## Ingredients:

- (1) lb ground meat (I use turkey, feel free to substitute with whatever rocks your world)
- (2) 15 oz. cans Dark Red Kidney Beans (I use Joan of Arc brand)
- (1) 28 oz. can of either crushed or pureed tomatoes (I use any national brand made with only tomatoes- no tomato paste, salt, spices, or flavorings)
- (1) 6 oz. can tomato paste- (I use Contadina- plain- no spices added)
- (1) med. size onion (i use sweet onions)
- (1) medium-to-large red bell pepper
- EVOO (Extra Virgin Olive Oil)- used for sautéing- anywhere betw. 1/2-to-1 Tbsp
- (Optional) Fresh mushrooms- 4-to-6 oz.
- Rice (cooked separately)
- (Optional) Havarti cheese- for grating over the portions just before serving

**Spices:** (all measures approximate- I measure by eye)

- Basil- (2) tsp
- Oregano- 1/2 tsp
- Cumin- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp
- Bay Leaf- (2) leaves
- Red Pepper Flakes- 1/2 tsp (I remove the white seeds-they tend to be bitter-and use red flakes only)
- Garlic (fresh and crushed)- (3) cloves about the size of the last joint of the ring finger
- Black Pepper- 1/8 tsp freshly ground
- Salt- to taste, AFTER chili is cooked

## Creation-

In a 3 or 4 Qt. cook pot, medium-to-low heat setting, add the tomato sauce, paste, and the liquid from the cans of kidney beans. Stir in the spices. (You can stir in the crushed garlic at this point, or sauté it in the fry pan with the onion and bell pepper before adding- see below)

As this spiced-up tomato sauce component (the chili base) simmers, in a 12" non-stick fry pan run in some EVOO, with burner set to medium.

When the oil gets hot, add the onion and bell pepper, both of which have been diced. Cook until tender- onion is translucent and bell pepper is softened and flexible.

If you haven't put the garlic into the tomato sauce, you may add it at this time to the fry pan. I add a little more EVOO into the pan, let it get hot, and put the crushed garlic into it. I keep an eye on the heat and keep the garlic moving, taking care to not let it get scorched. If needed, I will sometimes add a little water (1/2 Tbsp or so) to bring down the fry pan temperature quickly. (To me, once garlic gets dark brown or blackened, it has a bitter, off-putting taste). For garlic, I shoot for translucency or a pale brown color at the darkest.

Place these sautéed vegetables into the chili and stir in well.

Add a bit more EVOO to the fry pan, and if using mushrooms, put them in, cut to approx. 1/8" squares. (I usually use the caps only, as the stems are typically spongy). Sautee them for 5 min. or so, until they lose most of their moisture and start to brown a bit. At this point add the meat, and cook it thoroughly. I use the spatula to break the meat up into small pieces. Once it is done, add to the chili.

Let it all cook together for at least an hour, low heat and gently simmering, stirring up from the bottom every 5 minutes or so. The longer you cook it, the better it will get. If you are able to leave it for several days in the fridge, that is better yet, as it will continue to mellow as the components meld together, and the harsh edge to the tomato base will smooth out.

In any event, after about an hour of cooking, taste the mixture, and adjust the spices to your liking.

About 30 to 40 minutes before serving, add the kidney beans, mix in well and continue cooking on low, simmering.

White rice takes about 20 minutes to cook, brown about 40 minutes, so time this accordingly.

I will add the rice into the individual bowls first, and ladle the chili on top. My personal ratio is about (1) part rice to (2) parts chili.

(Be sure to keep the Bay leaves from being served up!)

I add freshly grated Havarti just before serving. I love the creamy/buttery flavor and texture!

I add salt at the very last, letting guests adjust their chili as they desire.