

Chili!

Serves 6 for dinner or 8 for lunch

(Prepare the afternoon, morning, or even days before — chili gets better the longer it has to sit and *marry* flavors. Then just heat up at serving time.)

Ingredients:

<i>1 large onion, chopped</i>	<i>4 tablespoons tomato paste</i>
<i>2 cloves garlic, chopped fine or pressed</i>	<i>1 teaspoon oregano</i>
<i>3 tablespoons salad oil</i>	<i>2 teaspoons ground cumin</i>
<i>2 lbs beef chuck, cut into ½-inch cubes</i>	<i>1 to 3 teaspoons chili power (2 is best)</i>
<i>1 4-ounce can green chilies</i>	<i>1 16-ounce can pinto or kidney beans</i>
<i>1 10-ounce can beef consommé</i>	

Ahead of time:

1. In Dutch oven or large, covered skillet sauté onion and garlic in oil until golden, but not brown (about 4-5 minutes). Add beef cubes and continue to cook, stirring often, until they're brown on all sides. Now stir in chilies (*with* their juice), consommé, tomato paste, oregano, cumin, and 1 teaspoon chili powder (go easy, you can add more later on). Bring to the boiling point, cover, and lower heat to a simmer.
2. Continue to simmer over low heat (about 200°) for 1½ to 2 hours, until meat is tender to the fork. Add beans with their liquid, stir to blend flavors. At this point taste chili and add more chili powder, if desired. Simmer for an additional 5 minutes, then remove from heat.
3. Let chili cook, then cover and refrigerate for a few hours, overnight or even a few days.

At serving time:

4. Skim any excess fat from top of chilled chili, and then heat at low temperature (225°), stirring frequently to prevent sticking, until heated through. Serve in bowls; garnish with shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese and green pepper or onion rings.

Serve with corn bread, sliced avocado and green salad, fresh fruit (Satsuma oranges are great), and grapefruit segments over lemon sherbet for dessert.

Recipe by Jennifer Pettit from some long ago forgotten magazine