Kevin’s Texas Red Chili

No beans or tomatoes: fork-tender chuck, toasted dried chiles and a light masa finish.



Serves 8 generously Prep 45 min Braise 2½–3½ hr Finish 15 min Rest 20 min. Allow about 4–5 hours. Cook to fork tenderness, not the clock. Use a heavy 6–7-quart Dutch oven.

INGREDIENTS

BEEF & CHILE BASE

4 lb beef chuck, 1-inch cubes; trim hard fat & silverskin, keep marbling

4 ancho (~60 g), 4 guajillo (~30 g), 2 pasilla (~15 g), dried

1–2 dried árbol, optional heat

3 tbsp tallow or high-heat oil, divided

2 tsp fine sea salt, more to taste; not equal-volume coarse kosher salt

1 medium yellow onion, finely diced; 6 garlic cloves, minced

2 tsp ground cumin; 1 tsp crushed Mexican oregano; 1 tsp black pepper

4 cups low-sodium beef stock, divided 1 + 3; extra as needed

1 cup amber lager or 1 extra cup stock; avoid bitter IPA

FINISH

2 tbsp masa harina (not cornmeal) + 1/4 cup cool water

If needed: 1 extra tbsp masa + 2 tbsp cool water

2 tsp cider vinegar; up to 1 tsp more to taste

SERVE SEPARATELY

Minced white onion, warm corn tortillas or cornbread

METHOD

1 Toast, hydrate & scrape

Wear gloves; stem, deseed and open chiles. Dry-toast over medium-low heat about 10–20 sec per side until fragrant and pliable; never blacken or smoke. Discard scorched chiles. Cover with just-boiled water, weight down and soak 25–30 min; drain and discard water. Lay ancho, guajillo and pasilla skin-side down; scrape inner pulp with a teaspoon and discard tough skins. If thin flesh resists scraping, blend those softened, deseeded chiles separately and press through a fine-mesh strainer. Blend pulp with 1 cup of the measured stock; add softened, deseeded árbol if using, straining as needed. Cool to warm first; follow hot-liquid instructions and never seal steaming liquid in a nonvented blender.

2 Brown the chuck

Pat beef dry; season with 2 tsp fine salt. Heat 1 tbsp tallow in the Dutch oven over medium-high. Sear in 3–4 uncrowded batches, using remaining tallow as needed, until two sides brown deeply; transfer to a bowl. Keep brown fond, remove blackened bits. Do not cook through.

3 Build the chile base

Reduce to medium; soften onion in residual fat 6–8 min, using a splash of stock if fond threatens to burn. Add garlic 30 sec, then cumin, oregano and pepper 20–30 sec. Stir in puree and cook 3–4 min without scorching.

4 Braise gently to tenderness

Add lager (or its stock substitute) and scrape up fond. Return beef and juices; add remaining 3 cups measured stock. Bring to a gentle simmer, partly cover and cook on low 2½–3½ hr. Barely bubble; do not boil hard. Stir and scrape occasionally; add extra stock only to prevent sticking or keep meat mostly submerged. Check at 2½ hr: cubes should yield easily to a fork while holding shape. Keep cooking if chewy.

5 Thicken lightly with masa

Whisk 2 tbsp masa + 1/4 cup cool water; stir in and simmer uncovered 10–15 min, stirring often. Sauce should coat a spoon and cling to beef, not become porridge. If thin, reduce first; only then, if needed, add 1 extra tbsp masa + 2 tbsp cool water and simmer 10 min more. Loosen with stock if thick.

6 Season & rest

Stir in 2 tsp vinegar; taste for salt and add up to 1 tsp more vinegar only if needed. Aim for rounded, not sour. Rest off heat 20 min, then serve. Refrigerate promptly for next-day reheating; never leave the pot out overnight.

Store safely. Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers within 2 hr (1 hr above 90°F). Never cool a large pot overnight on the counter. Keep at 40°F or below; use within 3–4 days or freeze promptly. Reheat throughout to 165°F, stirring and checking beef and sauce. Wash hands and utensils after raw beef. Vinegar is seasoning, not preservation.

Sources: Inspired Taste (technique) · USDA FSIS (leftovers) · danicabrackett reel (inspiration only) The reel uses ground beef and tomatoes, not this method. heyrocky.ai/recipes/kevins-texas-red-chili

RECIPE NOTE

Not kitchen-tested; quantities, yield and times are estimates. AI-generated serving illustration.

Sources: [1] inspiredtaste.net · [2] fsis.usda.gov · [3] facebook.com · [4] heyrocky.ai