

Chili A Cool New Way

(NAPSA)—Texas prides itself as a place where cowboys still roam; cattle are plentiful; people still remember the Alamo and where barbecue battles with chili as the cuisine of choice. Speaking of chili, if you know beans about Texas chili, goes the saying, you know chili has no beans.

A thoroughly Texan food, this hearty beef stew was first created by chuck wagon cooks on long cattle drives and legend has it that the first Texas chili was made without beans. Now found on menus throughout the U.S., the original ingredients in this all-American favorite dish were probably beef, chilis, oregano and garlic. Modern variations have substituted every kind of meat, ranging from armadillo to venison, with other added ingredients including beans, corn, new spices and cheese.

Chili evokes more than a fiery response from the taste buds, with some fans describing themselves as “chili maniacs” who attend or compete in any number of the 15 chili cookoff events that take place each month throughout the year in Texas.

Texas chili can be had year-round at some premier chili events such as the Chili Superbowl, the Republic of Texas Chilympiad and the Terlingua International Chili Championship. Moreover, visitors to Texas can enjoy a bowl of this hearty specialty at most fine restaurants during a visit to the state where a whole world of experience awaits. From the rugged, unspoiled terrain of the mountains, to the historic pioneer settlements and areas of urban sophistication and beaches, it's easy to see how Texas is like a whole other country. For further information about chili cookoffs and other events, or to plan a trip to Texas, visit www.traveltexas.com.

In the meantime, here's a recipe for Texas-style chili, which comes straight from a reliable source, “The Best of the Best from Texas,” edited by Gwen McKee and Barbara Moseley.



Chili maniacs may feel right at home in Texas, a state with up to 15 chili cookoffs a month.

Texas Chili

- 3 pounds lean beef, cubed or coarsely ground**
- ¼ cup salad oil**
- 6 cups water**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 6 tablespoons chili powder**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 10 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds**
- 1 teaspoon oregano leaves, crushed**
- ½ teaspoon red pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 3 tablespoons sweet Hungarian paprika**
- 1 tablespoon dried onion flakes**
- 3 tablespoons flour**
- 6 tablespoons cornmeal**

In a 6-quart saucepan, sear beef (cubed or coarsely ground) in salad oil until beef color is gray, not brown. Add water, bay leaves, chili powder, salt, garlic, cumin seeds, oregano, red pepper, black pepper, sugar, paprika and onion flakes. Simmer, covered, 2 hours. Cool. Refrigerate overnight so flavors will mellow. Remove top layer of solidified fat. Reheat. With a little cold water make a paste of flour and cornmeal. Add paste to chili. To obtain a smooth texture, cook and stir 5-7 minutes after thickening has been added. Remove bay leaves before serving. Serves 6.