

BEST GROUND BEEF CHILI

SERVES 8 TO 10

Diced avocado, sour cream, and shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese are also good options for garnishing. This chili is intensely flavored and should be served with tortilla chips and/or plenty of steamed white rice.

- 2 pounds 85 percent lean ground beef**
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 cups water**
- Salt and pepper**
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda**
- 6 dried ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, and torn into 1-inch pieces**
- 1 ounce tortilla chips, crushed (¼ cup)**
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin**
- 1 tablespoon paprika**
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder**
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander**
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano**
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme**
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes**
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 1 onion, chopped fine**
- 3 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1–2 teaspoons minced canned chipotle chiles in adobo sauce**
- 1 (15-ounce) can pinto beans**
- 2 teaspoons sugar**
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar**
- Lime wedges**
- Coarsely chopped cilantro**
- Chopped red onion**



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1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 275 degrees. Toss beef with 2 tablespoons water, 1½ teaspoons salt, and baking soda in bowl until thoroughly combined. Set aside for 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, place anchos in Dutch oven set over medium-high heat; toast, stirring frequently, until fragrant, 4 to 6 minutes, reducing heat if anchos begin to smoke. Transfer to food processor and let cool.

3. Add tortilla chips, cumin, paprika, garlic powder, coriander, oregano, thyme, and 2 teaspoons pepper to food processor with anchos and process until finely ground, about 2 minutes. Transfer mixture to bowl. Process tomatoes and their juice in now-empty workbowl until smooth, about 30 seconds.

4. Heat oil in now-empty pot over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 4 to 6 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add beef and cook, stirring with wooden spoon to break meat up into ¼-inch pieces, until beef is browned and fond begins to form on pot bottom, 12 to 14 minutes. Add ancho mixture and chipotle; cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes.

5. Add remaining 2 cups water, beans and their liquid, sugar, and tomato puree. Bring to boil, scraping bottom of pot to loosen any browned bits. Cover, transfer to oven, and cook until meat is tender and chili is slightly thickened, 1½ to 2 hours, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

6. Remove chili from oven and let stand, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Stir in any fat that has risen to top of chili, then add vinegar and season with salt to taste. Serve, passing lime wedges, cilantro, and chopped onion separately. (Chili can be made up to 3 days in advance.)