

The Best Chili Recipe

by Holly Nilsson | July 10, 2020

At a Glance

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| Yield | 8 servings |
| Prep Time | 20 minutes |
| Cook Time | 45–60 minutes |
| Total Time | 1 hour 5 minutes |
| Rating | 4.96/5 (2,892 votes) |

Overview

A hearty, weeknight-friendly pot of chili loaded with ground beef and beans, gently simmered with chili powder and cumin. Serve with your favorite toppings and a side of cornbread, buttered toast, or buttermilk biscuits.

Ingredients

Note: The chili powder is used in two additions (“divided”).

- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons chili powder, *divided*, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 14.5 ounces crushed tomatoes (1 can)
- 19 ounces canned red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 14.5 ounces canned diced tomatoes (with juices)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups beef broth
- 1 cup beer (optional; see Variations)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar (optional)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. **Season & brown.** In a bowl, combine the ground beef with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of the chili powder. In a large heavy pot over medium-high heat, brown the seasoned beef with the onion, jalapeño, and garlic until the beef is no longer pink. Drain excess fat.
2. **Simmer.** Stir in the remaining chili powder, cumin, bell pepper, crushed tomatoes, kidney beans, diced tomatoes (with juices), beef broth, beer (if using), tomato paste, brown sugar

(if using), and a pinch of salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer *uncovered* for 45–60 minutes, stirring occasionally, until thickened to your liking.

3. **Taste & serve.** Adjust seasoning with additional salt, pepper, or chili powder as desired. Ladle into bowls and finish with your favorite toppings.

Suggested Toppings & Sides

Shredded cheddar, sliced green onions, chopped cilantro, diced onion, sour cream, sliced jalapeños, hot sauce, crushed tortilla chips. Serve with cornbread, buttermilk biscuits, or buttered toast.

Variations & Tips

- **Heat level:** For more heat, keep the jalapeño seeds or add chili flakes/hot sauce. For milder chili, use half a jalapeño or omit.
- **Protein swaps:** Ground turkey or chicken work well; drain fat if needed.
- **Beans:** Red kidney beans are classic; pinto or black beans are excellent alternatives. If using *chili beans* (seasoned and sauced), you may reduce added salt.
- **Beer:** Adds depth; feel free to substitute with additional beef broth.
- **Spice profile:** For a Tex-Mex vibe, add a packet of taco seasoning or extra cumin, paprika, and oregano.

How to Thicken

Simmering uncovered naturally reduces and thickens the chili (preferred). If short on time, add a small sprinkle of cornmeal or a quick slurry (1 tablespoon cornstarch or flour whisked with cold water) and simmer a few minutes more.

Freezing & Reheating

Chili freezes and reheats beautifully. Cool completely, portion into airtight containers or freezer bags, and freeze up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and reheat gently on the stovetop or in the microwave, adding a splash of broth or water if needed.

Ingredient Scaling (Quick Reference)

Multiply amounts as needed. “To taste” items remain as desired.

| Ingredient | 1 × | 2 × |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Lean ground beef | 2 lb | 4 lb |
| Onion (diced) | 1 | 2 |
| Jalapeño (finely diced) | 1 | 2 |
| Garlic (cloves, minced) | 4 | 8 |
| Chili powder (divided) | 2.5 tbsp | 5 tbsps |
| Ground cumin | 1 tsp | 2 tsps |
| Green bell pepper (diced) | 1 | 2 |
| Crushed tomatoes | 14.5 oz | 29 oz |
| Kidney beans (rinsed) | 19 oz | 38 oz |
| Diced tomatoes (with juices) | 14.5 oz | 29 oz |
| Beef broth | 1.5 cups | 3 cups |
| Beer (optional) | 1 cup | 2 cups |
| Tomato paste | 1 tbsp | 2 tsps |
| Brown sugar (optional) | 1 tbsp | 2 tsps |
| Salt & black pepper | to taste | to taste |

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