

## Les's Slow Cooker "Kitchen-less" Chili – Comfort du Jour

My chili recipe has grown and changed considerably over the years, but the baseline recipe still has some "Mel's Diner" in it, with ground meat, tomato paste, onions, garlic and kidney beans. This time around, I have a new challenge—making my chili without a kitchen. Using a multi-purpose slow cooker and a toaster oven, I got the job done. I hope you enjoy it.

### INGREDIENTS (MAKES ABOUT 8 SERVINGS)

1 pound ground bison\*  
1 medium onion, diced  
1/2 each green and red peppers, diced  
1 medium jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 bulb garlic  
1 can Rotel diced tomatoes (I used the "hot" variety)\*  
2 small cans of chopped green chiles\*  
1 10-ounce can tomato paste  
1 12-ounce beer\*  
1 packet Frontera brand skillet sauce (you will need less than half the packet)  
2 cans red pinto beans (for this I used dark red; normally I mix dark and light red beans), drained  
1-2 Tbsp. ground chipotle\*  
A couple pinches of dried jalapeno flakes  
1 Tbsp. cocoa powder  
Salt and pepper

### NOTES

- Bison can be substituted with ground beef, ground turkey or other favored protein; chili also works great with different kinds of stewed or smoked meats cut into small chunks.
- Rotel makes three varieties of diced tomatoes; use whichever suits your heat preference.
- I used Ortega's fire-roasted, mild chopped green chilis for this batch, but any will do.
- I like to use a dark beer; for this batch it was Guinness Foreign Extra Stout, which Terrie thought was too bold but it was the only one in the downstairs fridge.
- Ground chipotle can be substituted with other types of seasoning such as ancho chili powder or a seasoning packet mix or a combination of seasonings, all based on heat preference and desired flavor profile. Add in whatever you like on a given day. Chili never comes out exactly the same, at least in our kitchen. And that's OK.
- If you don't have a multipurpose slow cooker, you could brown the beef and sauté the vegetables in a fry pan, then add all other ingredients into a cast-iron pot.
- Needless to say, garlic can be roasted in a regular oven. Unless you're remodeling your kitchen and you need to get creative.

## Les's Slow Cooker "Kitchen-less" Chili – Comfort du Jour

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pre-heat toaster oven to 400° F. Cut off head of garlic bulb, drizzle with olive oil and wrap in foil. Cook 1 to 1½ hours until the bulb is golden brown.
2. Brown ground bison in multipurpose slow cooker on brown setting, adding in small batches to avoid steaming. After initial browning, add skillet sauce to coat bison, then remove from slow cooker.
3. Add olive oil and sauté the vegetables about 5 minutes until soft and translucent.
4. Change setting to slow cook on low, return ground bison to the slow cooker, and then add in Rotel diced tomatoes, beer and tomato paste. Add seasonings. Mix all ingredients well. If mixture appears too thin, gradually add more tomato paste; if too thick, add water.
5. After simmering about 90 minutes, add kidney beans and heat through.