



Smokey Bowl of Red

Found “Bowl of Red” in Susan Spungen’s excellent cookbook, *Open Kitchen*. The only thing we changed was the title because those big chilies aren’t bringing the heat. They’re creating a complex environment for all the beef to come alive in. Oh, and you’re not misreading the ingredients – it’s all meat, onion, and chilies, baby!

Ingredients

- 2 ounces dried chilies, such as New Mexico, pasilla, guajillo, or ancho (about 6; use one or any combo)
- 2 dried arbol chilies
- 3-4 lbs. beef chuck cut into 1-2 inch pieces
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 12-ounce bottle of dark beer; or 1 cup of coffee
- 2 tbsp. masa harina
- **For Serving**
- Sliced scallions
- Corn nuts (our favorite)
- Grated sharp cheddar cheese
- Sour cream
- Lime wedges
- Cilantro sprigs
- Thinly sliced radishes

1. Break up the chilies and leave most of the seeds and stems behind. Place in a blender jar and pour 2 cups of boiling water over them. Let stand until the chilies are pliable and the liquid has cooled.

2. Meanwhile, pat the beef dry with paper towels and season well with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large heavy skillet over high heat. Add half of the beef and cook until well browned on all sides, about 6 minutes. Transfer to a Dutch oven. Repeat with 1 tablespoon of the remaining oil and the remaining meat. Transfer to the Dutch oven.

3. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in the skillet and lower the heat to medium-low. Add the onion and garlic and cook until translucent, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the cumin, oregano, and 1 teaspoon salt.

4. Meanwhile, blend the chilies until smooth.

5. Add the beer or coffee to the skillet and bring to a boil., scraping the bottom of the pan. Add the chile puree and rinse the blender with 1 cup of water. Add the liquid to the skillet.

6. Transfer the contents of the skillet to the Dutch oven and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 2 ½ hours, or until the meat is tender. Remove the lid, increase the heat to high, and cook for 5 minutes to reduce it slightly. Move some of the meat aside, stir the masa harina into the liquid, and simmer for a few more minutes to thicken. Season with salt. Serve immediately, or let cool and refrigerate until ready to serve. Trust us, the flavor gets deeper the longer it sits.