

Pulled Pork and White Bean Chili

I don't suppose I get extra credit for writing a recipe that's double slow-cooked, but that's just what this is: pork shoulder, braised to falling apart in spicy green salsa, then pulled and stirred into plump white beans that have been simmered for hours with the braising liquid, tomatoes, cumin, chilies, and garlic. The result—a relatively easy, deeply flavorful (but not blow-your-mind spicy) chili spiked with shreds of tender pork—is enough for a crowd. Any leftover chili can be cooled, then frozen in airtight containers up to 6 months.

This recipe takes some planning—please read it carefully before beginning. And don't be afraid to make it ahead of time; the flavors will only improve with a day (or three) in the refrigerator. I made the pork after an early dinner one night, cooked the beans overnight, and simmered the finished chili just before dinner the next day.

TIME: 1 hour active time, plus plenty of slow cooking

MAKES: 10 servings

For the pork:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 (roughly 3-pound) boneless pork shoulder, trimmed of excess fat
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 (16-ounce) jars green salsa*

For the beans:

- 2 pounds dried cannellini or great northern beans (or a combination of the two)
- 2 (28-ounce) cans chopped tomatoes
- 3 (7-ounce) cans fire-roasted chopped green chilies
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 5 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 4 cups chicken stock

For serving:

- Chopped cilantro
- Chopped avocado
- Crumbled cotija or shredded Monterey Jack cheese

**Be sure to taste your green salsa before using it—if you don't like it in the jar, you probably won't like it in the chili. I like using El Paso or Trader Joe's version, although the latter is a bit salty, so watch your seasoning if you use it. Of course, you could use any kind or color salsa (or a mixture), as long as you avoid anything fruity.*

First, braise the pork: Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Heat a large, ovenproof Dutch oven or casserole dish over medium heat. Add the oil. Season the pork on all sides with salt and pepper, then brown on all sides (about 5 minutes per side, undisturbed). Transfer the pork to a plate, add the onion, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes, or until the onion is soft. Return the pork to the pot, add the salsa, and add water, if necessary, until the liquid comes halfway up the side of the pork. Bring the liquid to a bare simmer, cover the pot, and braise in the oven for 2 to 2 1/2 hours, turning the pork halfway through cooking—the pork is done when it falls apart when you try to pick it up with tongs. Transfer the pork to a plate, and reserve the braising liquid for cooking the beans. When the pork is cool enough to handle, chop or pull it into small pieces (discarding any fat), and refrigerate it overnight.

While the pork is cooking, start the beans: Place the beans in a large pot and add water to cover by 3 or 4 inches. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, cover, and set aside for an hour. Drain the beans, and transfer to a large slow cooker, along with the tomatoes and chilies.

When the pork is done, heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the oil, then the onion, and cook, stirring, until the onion is soft, about 10 minutes. Add the spices (next five ingredients), and cook and stir for 5 minutes. Add one cup of the chicken stock, bring to a simmer, and cook for a minute or two, scraping any spices off the bottom of the pan. Pour the onion mixture over the beans in the slow cooker, add the reserved braising liquid, stir, and cook on low heat for 10 hours, undisturbed.

Before serving, combine the beans and the chopped pork in a (probably very large) pot, or two smaller pots. Add the remaining chicken stock, and simmer for half an hour or so. Serve hot, garnished with chopped cilantro, avocado, and cheese.