

Father's Day Dinner — The Ultimate Chili Dog



by Kamryn Minch
from June 2021
Key Peninsula News

KEY
PENINSULA
NEWS

Whenever we ask Dad what he wants for dinner on literally any occasion, the question is usually posed tongue-in-cheek because we know the answer. It's never steak, salmon, or burgers, it's always chili dogs. Dinner for his birthday? Chili dogs. Dinner for Father's Day? Chili dogs. Dinner for when he's in charge of making dinner? Typically, without interference from the rest of us, chili dogs. I can bet most people have maybe two or three chili dogs per year, if that. I've already had five.

Some may call me lucky, and many probably think something is wrong with us (Mom), but like father, like daughter, I'm a connoisseur of the finer things in life and can appreciate the complexities within the flavorful ensemble that is a chili dog.

Canned chili is our typical go-to for chili dog nights, but on special occasions like Father's Day we strive to set the meal apart by making chili from scratch. And we don't just use any ol' chili recipe. No way! From flavor to texture, we've mastered a chili recipe that has been specially crafted for the creation of the ultimate chili dog. Not only is it delicious, but it's super easy too.

Fair warning, in this family we like a bit of spice so this recipe features jalapeños. I use pickled jalapeños here instead of fresh so the heat is a bit milder. While you can opt to omit the jalapeños altogether (or even choose to use fresh if you like to live dangerously), do keep the half cup of jalapeño pickle juice from the jar as it really brings the flavors together.

As far as the rest of the staple ingredients go, we don't have a preference for type of hot dog or bun, so go wherever your family's brand loyalties lie. Toppings, on the other hand, need to be taken seriously. A smothering of chili does not a chili dog make. For the sake of taste buds and Instagram (because obviously this masterpiece will be a work of art and too good not to share) consider the following:

Toasted bun, ketchup and yellow mustard (yes, I did, don't interrupt), grilled dog — and it must be grilled — two to three ladlefuls of chili, a dusting of cheddar cheese, a scoop of sour cream, and fresh onion or chives. If you really want to party, get some bacon in there; this meal is for Dad after all. You can substitute a relish for ketchup; utilizing that element of sweet to play off the smokiness of the chili will only enhance the chili dog experience.

And, of course, there may be a critic of the chili dog lurking in your household unit. Luckily the chili is perfectly acceptable on its own, but better with a side of corn bread.

Chili Dog Chili

3 15-ounce cans of beans:	½ teaspoon salt
2 red bean, 1 black bean	½ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon olive oil	1 tablespoon diced chipotle pepper in adobo sauce
1 white onion, diced	2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 green pepper, diced	1 can tomato sauce
3 large cloves garlic, minced	1 cup pickled jalapeños, sliced or chopped
1 pound ground beef	½ cup of pickled jalapeño juice
1 tablespoon cumin	2 cups of beef broth
1 tablespoon chili powder	
1 teaspoon smoked paprika	

To make: Drain and rinse the 3 cans of beans and set aside.

In a large pot or Dutch oven, drizzle olive oil and sauté the diced onion and green pepper over medium heat until soft and translucent.

While the onion and pepper cook, premix the cumin, chili powder, smoked paprika, ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl.

Add minced garlic to the onion and pepper in the pot and sauté for one minute. Add ground beef along with 2 teaspoons of spice mix. Break up the meat and stir frequently until browned.

When the ground beef is thoroughly cooked, stir in the diced chipotle pepper and tomato paste until the meat and onion mix is completely coated.

Incorporate the jalapeño slices, jalapeño juice, tomato sauce, beef broth and the remainder of the spice mix. Stir until everything is well mixed and then add the beans.

Turn up the heat to high and allow the pot to come to a boil before turning the heat down to low and letting the chili simmer with the lid on for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally.

While the chili is cooking, fire up the grill and get those dogs hot.