



CHEF TIP The next day, scoop leftover chili on cheese enchiladas and heat them in the oven. It's one of Ron Bird's favorite meals.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIMBERLY DAVIS

Ron's State Chili Dish

Ingredients

2 lbs. ground round or ground chuck
1 bell pepper, coarsely chopped
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
1 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes
¼ cup ketchup
4 tablespoons chile powder
2 tablespoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons granulated garlic
(can substitute fresh garlic finely diced,
add to meat while browning)
Water
Salt to taste
Can of chili beans or ranch-style
beans, if desired

Directions

Brown the ground meat along with the chopped green pepper and chopped onions, carefully breaking up the meat to avoid clumps. Once thoroughly cooked, add tomatoes, ketchup, and spices with about one tomato can of water. Simmer on low heat, stirring regularly for at least one hour and adding additional water to your desired consistency for chili. Cooking longer enhances the flavor. If desired, add the beans just before serving.

Note: This recipe is about a 3.5 on the scale of spiciness from 1 to 5-1 being a lack of spices to 5 being steam rushing out of your ears.

Yield 10-12 servings



Ron Bird [HELOTES, TEXAS]

Back in 1977, Ron Bird, who served as a Texas legislator from 1973-1981, was in a room full of legislators with a big pot of chili in hand—the perfect recipe for persuading Texas lawmakers to declare the food as the state dish. It worked: Chili became our official edible symbol. Over the years, Bird has made some revisions to the recipe, which was passed down from his mother. He still makes it during chilly times of the year for his family. —Justine Espersen