



French Inspired Chicken Chili

8 chicken skinless, boneless thighs
1-1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups red wine or Riunite Lambrusco
1/2 pound thickly sliced bacon, chopped
2 Tablespoon olive oil, as needed
1 large onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
8 ounces fresh mushrooms, chopped
2 to 3 cups chicken stock, as needed
1 Tablespoon medium hot chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon Herbes de Provence
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
1/4 cup all purpose flour
2 (15.5 ounce) cans white beans, drained, rinsed

Topping Garnish: 1/2 cup (each) halved seedless red grapes; chopped parsley; diced pepper Monterey cheese; crispy fried onions

Cut chicken into bite size pieces; season with salt and pepper. Place in marinating container or large plastic bag. Pour wine over the chicken to coat. Place in refrigerator for about 4 hours or ready to cook. Turn occasionally.

When ready to cook, preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Place bacon in 5-1/2 quart Dutch Oven pot; cook, while stirring until crispy; remove bacon with slotted spoon; set aside. Remove chicken from marinade; save marinade; pat off excess liquid from chicken with paper towels. Add chicken in batches to pan drippings; sauté each batch over medium high heat about 5 minutes; add olive oil as needed; remove partially cooked chicken; set aside. Add diced onions, garlic, and mushrooms; sauté to soften; remove; set aside.

Deglaze pot with half of chicken stock and reserved wine marinade. Add chili powder, cumin, white pepper, Herbs de Provence, oregano, and red pepper for more heat if desired.

In separate pan, make a roux by cooking to melt butter and stir in flour until mixture is smooth.

Stir prepared roux into Dutch oven pot; cook stirring to lightly thicken; add more chicken stock as needed. Return mushrooms, onions, chicken and bacon to pot; stir in beans; bring to boil. Cover pot; place in preheated oven for 30 minutes or chicken is very tender and chili sauce consistency.

Like most chilies, this dish tastes better the next day. Cook to warm; transfer to refrigerator until serving. To serve: Warm chili until hot; serve with garnish topping.

To Prepare Topping: In a small bowl. Stir grapes, parsley, cheese, and crisp onions right before serving to keep onions crispy. Serve with chili.

Serves: About 6 to 8

About the Recipe: Main dishes that simmered for a long time over a hot fire were common at this time. Many different meats could be used but fowl was plentiful. Soaking in red wine or using brandy tenderized the meat and gave it delicious taste. This recipe uses stronger spices like chili powder that weren't available but peppered herbs or foraged ingredients were added to enhance the flavor. Enjoy this updated chili that has a mellow delicious starting taste followed by a hot peppered pop at the end.