

Ze Oh Là Là Sweet Chili

By Jeremy Levan 2024

Ingredients:

- 30 cooked hamburger patties, crumbled or chopped
- 12 oz molasses
- 8 oz special dark cocoa powder
- 1 lbs. mini sweet peppers
- 2 medium onions, chopped (optional)
- 6 cloves garlic, minced (optional)
- 4 cups brewed coffee
- 4 cans (14.5 oz each) diced tomatoes (or Rotel for a spicier kick)
- 2 cans (15 oz each) kidney beans, drained and rinsed (optional)
- 2 cups beef broth (or water, to adjust thickness as needed)

Spices:

- 2 tbsp chili powder
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp cinnamon (for warmth and complexity)
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper (optional, for a bit of heat)

Instructions:

1. **Prepare the Base:**
 - Set your pressure cooker to the **sauté** function (or use stovetop, medium heat). If using onions and garlic, sauté them in a little oil until soft and fragrant (about 5 minutes). This step adds extra flavor but is optional.
2. **Combine Ingredients:**
 - Crumble or chop the **cooked hamburger patties** and add them to the pressure cooker.
 - Add the **molasses**, **special dark cocoa powder**, **brewed coffee**, **diced tomatoes**, **mini sweet peppers**, and **beef broth**. Stir to combine.
3. **Spice It Up:**
 - Stir in the **chili powder**, **cumin**, **smoked paprika**, **cinnamon**, **black pepper**, and **salt**. Adjust spices to your taste. Add **cayenne pepper** for more heat if desired.
4. **Beans (Optional):**
 - If using **beans**, add the drained kidney beans to the pot at this stage.
5. **Pressure Cook:**
 - Lock the lid of your pressure cooker and cook on **high pressure** for **15 minutes**. Once done, allow the pressure to release **naturally** for 10-15 minutes, then perform a **quick release** if necessary.
6. **Adjust Consistency:**
 - Check the chili's thickness. If it's too thick, add more beef broth or water. If it's too thin, switch to the **sauté** function and simmer until it thickens.
7. **Final Adjustments:**
 - Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed. You may want to add more salt, pepper, or spices depending on the final flavor balance.
8. **Serve:**
 - Serve your chili in bowls with your favorite toppings like shredded cheese, sour cream, diced onions, or jalapeños.

Target Flavor Profile:

- The regular brewed coffee will add a rich, smooth complexity that complements the molasses and cocoa without overwhelming the dish. The sweetness from the molasses will be balanced by the depth of the coffee and spices, making for a rich, memorable chili with layers of flavor.

This version should be perfect for your pressure cooker, keeping all the bold and unique flavors in check!

Servings:

Given the ingredients and the size of your pressure cooker, this recipe will yield approximately **16-20 quarts of chili**, depending on how much liquid you end up adding (from the beef broth, tomatoes, and other adjustments).

Your **23-quart pressure cooker** should comfortably handle this volume, leaving room for stirring and pressure expansion. This batch would be ideal for a large gathering or to freeze leftovers for future meals.

Final Adjustment Guide:

1. Balance the Sweetness:

Since your chili has molasses and cocoa, the sweetness could be bold. Here's how to balance it:

- **Use Acidity:** Add a little vinegar (like **apple cider vinegar** or **red wine vinegar**) or squeeze fresh **lime juice** at the end of cooking to balance the sweetness. Start with a tablespoon and adjust to taste.
- **Tomatoes:** The acidity of canned tomatoes or even tomato paste will help tone down sweetness. If you're worried about too much molasses, use extra tomatoes to bring in more acidity.
- **Salt:** Don't shy away from adding a little more salt if the flavors feel too sweet. Salt will help bring out savory elements and temper sweetness.

2. Spice Up for Depth:

Judges often look for chili with layers of flavor that build over time. The sweetness should hit first, but you want a mild burn that lingers on the palate.

- **Chili Powder and Cayenne:** Add a little more **chili powder** or **cayenne pepper** if your first batch isn't spicy enough. Even a small kick of heat can enhance the overall complexity.
- **Chipotle Peppers:** Adding a couple of **chipotle peppers** (or chipotle powder) can bring in smoky heat that pairs beautifully with the molasses and cocoa.
- **Paprika:** Smoked paprika can add a nice smoky edge that complements the sweetness while deepening the savory aspects.

3. Enhance Umami:

- **Soy Sauce or Worcestershire Sauce:** These can add umami (savory flavor) that will amplify the richness. Add 1-2 tablespoons of **Worcestershire sauce** for depth without overpowering the chili.
- **Mushroom Powder:** If available, a bit of **mushroom powder** can intensify the meaty umami without altering the overall taste profile.

4. Texture Matters:

Since you're using cooked hamburger patties, texture can be an important factor in a competition:

- **Sauté the Meat:** Before adding the patties to the chili, sauté them briefly in a little oil to create a bit of a crust. This will give them a more appealing texture and caramelized flavor.
- **Beans (Optional):** If allowed by competition rules, beans can add texture. Use **black beans** or **kidney beans** for variety, but make sure they don't dominate the dish.
- **Thickeners:** If your chili is too thin, use **masa harina** (corn flour) to thicken it, which will also add a subtle earthy flavor. Stir in 1-2 tablespoons near the end of cooking.

5. Taste Test:

- **Let it Sit:** Chili usually tastes better the next day as the flavors meld. If possible, prepare your chili a day in advance and taste it after it's had time to rest. This gives you a chance to adjust the seasoning before the competition.
- **Layer the Seasoning:** Taste and adjust the seasoning at different stages. Sometimes, you might need a little more **cumin**, **salt**, or **pepper** at the end, depending on how the flavors develop during cooking.

6. Presentation:

- **Garnish:** Presentation can give you an edge! Consider toppings like:
 - A sprinkle of **smoked cheddar** or **cotija cheese**
 - A dollop of **sour cream** or **crema**
 - Chopped **cilantro**
 - Sliced **jalapeños** for a fresh, spicy kick
 - Crispy **tortilla strips** or **cornbread** on the side
- **Serving:** Present your chili in a unique way, such as in **mini bread bowls** or with small portions of **cornbread** or **tortilla chips** on the side to make it more memorable



This Chili Recipe was created for the 2024 Cornudas Cafe Chili Contest

It was inspired by a sweet chili created by Guy Vanvorce, a former resident of Salt Flat, TX.
His recipe has multiple types of meat, but I wanted to stick with a single type of meat.

I then ran several parameters through a premium A.I. service and passed the results to Guy and a friend in Australia named "Ashen" for any feedback and additional suggestions they wanted to add.

This is the final version, I hope you enjoy it.

Jesse Larson helped prepare the batch for the competition since he has more experience cooking chili.