

TOLBERTS BOWL OF RED

SERVES 4 -6 (change servings and units)

Ingredients

12 dried ancho chiles
3 lbs lean beef chuck, cut in thumbsize pieces
3 tablespoon of lard or cooking oil
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 tablespoon cayenne
1 tablespoon Tabasco sauce
2 cloves garlic, chopped (or more)
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons masa harina (corn meal) (optional)

Directions

- 1 Break off the stems of the chiles, and remove the seeds.
- 2 Place chiles in a small saucepan and cover them with water.
- 3 Simmer for 30 minutes.
- 4 Purée the chiles in a blender with a tiny bit of cooking liquid to make a smooth, thin paste.
- 5 Use as little liquid as possible, unless you want the chili to be soupy.
- 6 Pour the chile purée into a Dutch oven or large, heavy pan.
- 7 In a heavy skillet, sear the meat in two batches with the lard/oil until the meat is gray.
- 8 Transfer each batch to the chile purée, then pour in enough of the chile cooking liquid to cover the meat by about 2 inches.
- 9 Bring the chili to a boil; reduce heat to a simmer.
- 10 Cook for 30 minutes.
- 11 Remove the chili from the heat, and stir in the rest of the ingredients.
- 12 Return chili to the heat, cover and resume simmering for 45 minutes, keeping the lid on except to stir just occasionally.
- 13 (Too much stirring tears up the meat) Add more chile liquid only if you think the mixture will burn otherwise.
- 14 After 45 minutes, you may add the masa harina, if you wish.
- 15 The masa adds a subtle, tamale-like taste, but it also thickens the chili.
- 16 Cover the chili again and simmer for another 30 minutes.
- 17 Do a lot of tasting to see if seasoning suits you.
- 18 Add more seasonings as you like, but go easy on the oregano to avoid ending up with a spaghetti sauce flavor.
- 19 Take the chili off the heat, and refrigerator overnight.
- 20 Skim as much fat as you wish from the chili before reheating it.