

CHICAGO'S "PEOPLE'S CHOICE" AWARD WINNER

Alfonso's Unusual Chili

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SIMPLE PREPARATION (full recipe inside)

- 1 packet "Alfonso's Unusual Chili Seasoning Mix"
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 15oz can tomato sauce
- 1 15oz can Pork & Beans (optional)
- ½ cup water (optional, if needed)

Brown beef over high heat in 2-qt pot. Mix in Alfonso's seasoning. Add tomato sauce. Stir thoroughly. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes, adding water as needed. Add Pork & Beans (if desired) and simmer 10 minutes more. Serve hot. Top with cheese, sour cream, and chopped green onions.

INGREDIENTS: Ground chile peppers, spices, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, monosodium glutamate.



NT.WT. 1¼oz

Alfonso's Unusual Chili

Chicago's 2002 People's Choice Award Winner
(ICS Windy City Regional Cook-Off)

FULL PREPARATION

- 2 packets "Alfonso's Unusual Chili Seasoning Mix"
- 1 lb Black Angus ground chuck or other prime high-fat ground beef
- 1 lb Black Angus chuck roast, cut into ½" cubes
- 1 large Vidalia onion or other sweet onion (e.g., Spanish or yellow), cored and finely chopped
- 2 medium vine-ripened tomatoes, finely chopped.
- 3 halves of large bell peppers (½ each green, yellow, red), cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- 2 15oz cans Tomato Sauce
- 2 15oz can Pork & Beans (optional, may substitute baked beans)
- ½ 11oz bottle sliced pickled Jalapeño peppers, drained & finely chopped (Hot, Medium, or Mild as preferred)
- 12 medium dried roasted "chile de arbol" peppers, crushed; and/or 3 cored, seeded, very finely minced medium habanero peppers
- 1 tblsp minced garlic, fresh or in olive oil
- 3 tblsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Filtered water
- Ketchup (optional for extra sweetness)
- Salt to taste
- Colby Jack shredded cheese (a mix of Colby and Monterrey Jack)
- Regular sour cream
- Green onions, sliced

Coat the bottom of a 6-quart or larger pot with the olive oil. Heat over high flame. Brown garlic to medium or dark golden color. Add onions and brown lightly (3-4 minutes).

Add cubed sirloin steak and brown. Reduce heat to medium and add ground beef. Cook 5 minutes, stirring often to prevent beef sticking.

Lower heat. Add bell peppers. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes.

Stir in both packets of "Alfonso's" seasoning (reserve a tablespoon of seasoning for later use). Mix thoroughly.

Pour 1 can tomato sauce into pot. Fill empty can with chopped tomatoes. Fill can to brim with filtered water. Add tomatoes and water to pot. Stir deeply but gently to avoid crushing tomatoes. Add second can tomato sauce as needed (avoid making chili too "tomato-ey"). Taste and add salt if needed. Add Jalapeños.

Roast "chile de arbol" peppers over an open flame until thoroughly blackened. Crush and mix into chili (may add or substitute habaneros).

Raise heat to high until pot boils, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 40 minutes. Stir deeply at least every 5 minutes to prevent burning. Add water from time to time if needed.

Stir in pork & beans and the reserved seasoning mix. Heat on high to return to boil. Reduce heat to medium low and simmer 10 minutes. Stir every 1-2 minutes to prevent beans from burning. Remove from flame.

MAKES 6-8 cups (2 quarts). Costs \$20-\$30 for ingredients.

SERVING NOTES

Serve in deep bowls. Sprinkle liberally with shredded Colby Jack. Add a dollop of sour cream. Top with sliced green onions. Goes best with beer or lemonade. Finish with a good dose of Pepto-Bismuth.

PREPARATION NOTES

Wash all vegetables thoroughly prior to use. Chop very finely.

Peel onions by running a paring knife lightly around the equator, then from top to bottom. Remove as few layers as needed to get rid of dry outer skin. Core onion like an apple by standing it on end, and cutting down across the rings, parallel to the core, in four long cuts. The bitter taste and harsh smell of an onion are contained within the centermost rings, so coring ensures a sweet, mild flavor.

Cut bell peppers lengthwise in half. Remove spines and seeds.

When using *Mild* Jalapeños, use entire 11oz bottle (drained) and omit green bell pepper.

Roast the "chile de arbol" peppers over an open flame. Be careful—they *will* catch fire. This is normal, and desirable. Please take appropriate safety precautions to avoid burning down your kitchen. If you are

not comfortable with this, use the habanero peppers instead. If not experienced, use surgeons' gloves when handling habaneros. They are *extremely* spicy, 40 to 200 times hotter than raw jalapeños. Even after washing your hands several times, contact with your eyes or other sensitive areas will cause severe irritation. Be careful!

For sweeter chili, add ketchup from time to time instead of water during 40-minute simmer.

PERSONAL NOTES

I'm often asked what makes my chili unusual. Three factors stand out:

1. "Alfonso's" seasoning plus the recipe's fresh chile peppers total more than a dozen different peppers harmoniously blended in the right proportions for a complex but refined flavor;
2. The sugar in the Vidalia onion, the bell peppers, the Pork & Beans, and the optional ketchup create a sweet-spicy flavor that is common in Asian cuisine, but rare in Western and most unusual in chili;
3. The Pork & Beans are a mellow smoky-sweet complement to the chili – they don't contrast as sharply as starchy red or pinto beans.

Chili tastes better the longer you cook it. I believe 40 minutes is adequate, but I recommend 1 to 2 hours if possible. Too much time and the chili powder may lose its bite. If it does, add a little more chili powder (to taste) 5 minutes before removing from flame.

You may use other cooked beans if you like, but never cook raw beans in the chili. Even cooked beans will absorb a lot of water. International Chili Society rules strictly forbid adding any beans to competition chili, and I agree that chili tastes best without starches.

To my horror, I've seen people soak fistfuls of crackers in chili with beans! My chili is not watery, it is meant to be thick and meaty. Beans and/or crackers absorb what little water there is and leave it with the consistency of spackle. I have not spent years slaving away in hot kitchens to perfect a recipe for spackle.

Please, be careful. This Alfonso's Unusual Chili is HOT, and is not intended for amateurs. Everyone else, Enjoy!

PS I'm not kidding about the Pepto-Bismuth.