

White Bean Chicken Chili

Recipe Rating: ***

Makes 6 servings.

If Anaheim chiles cannot be found, add an additional poblano and jalapeño to the chili. I prefer to substitute chicken thighs for the chicken breasts.

1. **BROWN CHICKEN.** Season chicken liberally with salt and pepper. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add chicken, skin side down, and cook without moving until skin is golden brown, about 4 minutes. Using tongs, turn chicken and lightly brown on other side, about 2 minutes. Transfer chicken to plate; remove and discard skin.

**3 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken breast halves ,
trimmed of excess fat and skin
1 tablespoon vegetable oil**

2. **PREP PEPPERS.** While chicken is browning, remove and discard ribs and seeds from 2 jalapeños; mince flesh. In food processor, process half of poblano chiles, Anaheim chiles, and onions until consistency of chunky salsa, ten to twelve 1-second pulses, scraping down sides of workbowl halfway through. Transfer mixture to medium bowl. Repeat with remaining poblano chiles, Anaheim chiles, and onions; combine with first batch (do not wash food processor blade or workbowl).

**3 medium jalapeño chiles (reserve one for Step 7)
3 poblano chiles (medium), stemmed, seeded, and
cut into large pieces
3 Anaheim chile peppers (medium), stemmed,
seeded, and cut into large pieces
2 medium onions , cut into large pieces (2 cups)**

3. **COOK VEGETABLES.** Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from Dutch oven (adding additional vegetable oil if necessary) and reduce heat to medium. Add minced jalapeños, chile-onion mixture, garlic, cumin, coriander, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables soften, about 10 minutes. Remove pot from heat.

**6 medium cloves garlic , minced or pressed
through garlic press (about 2 tablespoons)
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon Mexican oregano (RDY)**

4. **PUREE 1 CUP BEANS.** Transfer 1 cup cooked vegetable mixture to now-empty food processor workbowl. Add 1 cup beans and 1 cup broth and process until smooth, about 20 seconds. Add vegetable-bean mixture, remaining 2 cups broth, and chicken breasts to Dutch oven and bring to boil over medium-high heat.

**2 cans (15 ounces each) cannellini beans , drained
and rinsed. Reserve all but 1 cup for Step 6
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth (or two 14 ounce
cans)
Reserved cooked chicken**

NOTE - save remaining beans for step 6

5. **SIMMER CHICKEN.** Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until chicken breast registers 160 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 15 to 20 minutes.

6. **SIMMER BEANS/ SHRED CHICKEN.** Using tongs, transfer chicken to large plate. Stir remaining beans into chili and continue to simmer, uncovered. When cool enough to handle, shred chicken into bite-sized pieces, discarding bones.

Reserved beans

7. **PREP GARNISH.** If using chicken thighs (not breasts), return them to the pot. Simmer until beans are heated through and chili has thickened slightly, about 10 minutes.

**Reserved jalapeño chiles
1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro leaves
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice (from 2 to 3 limes)
4 scallions , white and light green parts sliced thin**

Mince remaining jalapeño, reserving and mincing ribs and seeds (see note below), and set aside. Stir shredded chicken (if using breasts), lime juice, cilantro, scallions, and remaining minced jalapeño into chili and return to simmer. Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper and serve.

Serve chili with non-fat sour cream, tortilla chips, and lime wedges.

RG notes:

This recipe is too spicy for Cynthia - even when I only used 2/3 of the peppers. If you want it VERY hot, you can add the minced ribs and seeds from the third jalapeño in step 7.



1. **Brown Chicken:** Brown the bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts before poaching them to achieve deep chicken flavor.



2. **Sauté Vegetables:** To create a flavorful chile-centered base, sauté the trio of chiles and onion along with the spices and garlic.



3. **Puree Vegetables:** To thicken the chili, process 1 cup each of the sautéed chile mixture, beans, and broth in the food processor.



4. **Stir in Fresh Chile:** Add one minced raw jalapeño to the finished dish for a last-minute burst of chile flavor.

(Additional notes from Cook's Illustrated 01/2007 magazine article)

This Southwestern-style chili often cooks up bland and watery, with chewy bits of rubbery chicken that make home cooks ask, "Where's the beef?"

The Problem: We found a lot of bad recipes for white chili—most bearing a closer resemblance to chicken and bean soup than actual chili.

The Goal: We wanted to create something worthy of the name "chili"—a rich, stew-like chili with moist, tender chicken, perfectly cooked beans, and a complex flavor profile.

The Solution: We found not one but three solutions. To fix bland, watery sauce we pureed some of our sautéed chile-onion mixture and beans with the broth to thicken the base—this approach had the added benefit of ensuring that chile flavor was present in every drop. To avoid floating bits of rubbery chicken, we browned, poached, and shredded bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts, which gave our chicken pieces a hearty texture and full flavor. And to solve the problem of insufficient chile flavor, we used a trio of fresh chiles: jalapeño, poblano, and Anaheim.

STEP BY STEP: The Chosen Chiles

We found that using a combination of poblanos, Anaheims, and jalapeños was the key to achieving vibrant chile flavor. Here's what each chile brings to the table.



Jalapeños: This small, smooth-skinned, forest-green chile provides heat and a bitter, green bell pepper-like flavor.



Anaheim: This long, medium-green, mildly spicy chile has an acidic, lemony bitterness.



Poblano: This large, heart-shaped, blackish-green chile is mild to medium-hot and packs a rich, vegetal, slightly sweet flavor.