

The Gentleman Caller's All Purpose Chili Sauce #1

What you need:

(This is to yield about 2 cups)

- 8 cloves garlic*
- 1/4 white onion, rough chopped
- 2 tablespoons lard (or shortening or vegetable oil)
- 14-16 guajillo dry chili peppers
- 1/3 cup canned diced tomatoes**
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 allspice berry, freshly ground (1/4 teaspoon)
- 1 whole clove, freshly ground (1/8-1/4 teaspoon)
- 1 teaspoon Mexican oregano
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon masa harina
- 1 1/2 cups chicken, turkey, pork, or vegetable stock

*If you are a garlic lover (as I am) you may use 8, 10, up to 12 cloves of garlic. If you do, add a little more honey.

**You may substitute Rotel diced tomatoes and green chilies for a bit more punch

Use your kitchen shears to snip the stem off your chilies. Cut a slit up the center of the skin; use your thumb to remove the seeds.

Fill a saucepan or metal mixing bowl half full of very hot water (over 120 degrees). In a dry cast iron or any pan that gets really hot, roast the chilies on high heat till they begin to smoke a bit. You will be able to smell them. Transfer the chilies to the hot water bowl. They should be covered. Allow steeping for at least 15 minutes.

In a large saucepan or small Dutch oven, melt 1 tablespoon of the lard. Sauté the onion. As the onion cooks, smash the garlic cloves and add them to the onion/lard sauté. Add the tomatoes to sort of deglaze. Add half the chicken

stock and allow to come to simmer. By now the chilies should have steeped. Add them to this mixture. Pour this entire mixture into a blender carafe and process at high speed until very smooth. Warning: hot liquid in the blender tends to explode on you. Either leave the lid ajar or process in half batches.

Once that mixture is smooth, you can re-use the pan or Dutch oven you just used to melt the remaining lard. Delicately whisk in the masa. Keep stirring as it begins to bubble. Add all the spices and allow them to open up. Pour the contents of the blender into the masa mixture. Whisk it as it comes to a simmer. If it's too thick, add more stock. Add the honey. Taste for salt level; based on how salty your stock is you might require more salt.

Simmer while whisking slowly for about 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and allow it to sit and marry.

Taste again before serving to test for salt and sweet levels. If it needs it, add more salt or honey. You be the judge. Be judicious.