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TRI-TIP STEAK CHILI

Whether you live for football season or just love a good chili, this set-and-forget recipe will let you out of the kitchen and back into the living room to join the party. Cooking chili sous vide will take longer than it would on a burner, but you don't have to watch or stir it, and the results are superior.

Adding the spice blend in stages is a technique I stole from prizewinning cook-off chili recipes. It adds a roundness and depth of flavor that's missing if it's added all at once. If you don't want to make your own spice blend, store-bought chili powder mix is fine. Some commercial mixes contain salt, so check the label and season your chili accordingly. For committed carnivores, this is a dish that can definitely be eaten unadorned, but it's also nice over rice or cheesy grits.

SERVES 4 as a main course | SOUS VIDE COOKING TIME: 8 hours (or up to 12 hours) |
ACTIVE PREP TIME: 30 minutes

SPICE BLEND

- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1½ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard

- 2 pounds tri-tip or boneless sirloin steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more as needed
- 2 tablespoons canola or other mild vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 red onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
- 2 jalapeño chiles, chopped and seeded if desired
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup pilsner or other pale lager
- 1½ cups canned crushed tomatoes (about one 14-ounce can)
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon molasses

GARNISHES

- ½ cup shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese (optional)
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh cilantro (optional)
- 2 green onions, white and green parts, thinly sliced (optional)
- ¼ cup sour cream (optional)

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DO-AHEAD STRATEGY

The cooked chili can be chilled in the bag in an ice water bath (see page 14) for 30 minutes and then refrigerated for up to 1 week. Reheat in a 55°C (131°F) water bath for 30 minutes before serving with the garnishes.

Preheat your sous vide water bath to 57°C (134.5°F).

To make the spice blend, in a small bowl, combine all of the ingredients and mix well. In a large bowl, season the steak with the 2 teaspoons salt and 1 tablespoon of the spice blend, stirring and tossing to coat the pieces evenly.

Heat the oil in a large cast-iron skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Add the steak pieces in a single layer, spacing them at least ½ inch apart so they will brown properly. (Depending on the size of your pan, you may need to brown the steak pieces in two or three batches.) Sear until the first side is deep golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Using tongs, flip the pieces and brown on the second side, 1 to 2 minutes more (the spices will help the meat brown quickly). Transfer the seared pieces to a platter or tray, leaving the oil behind in the pan.

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the butter, onion, chiles, and garlic to the pan. Season with a bit more salt to help the mixture soften and cook, stirring frequently, until completely soft and golden brown, about 10 minutes. Stir in 1 more tablespoon of the spice blend and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Pour in the beer and scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon or spatula to dislodge any browned bits. Let the beer boil until reduced by half, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, Worcestershire sauce, molasses, and the remaining spice blend and remove from the heat. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt if needed.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer the seared steak to a gallon-size freezer-safe ziplock bag and then ladle or pour in the sauce mixture. Seal using the water displacement method (see page 12/not provided).

When the water reaches the target temperature, lower the bagged steak into the water bath (making sure the bag is fully submerged) and cook for 8 hours. I recommend checking the water bath every few hours to see that the bag is still fully submerged. I also suggest covering the bath with plastic wrap or aluminum foil to minimize evaporation (see page 8 for explanation/not provided).

Remove the bag from the water bath and transfer the contents to a warmed serving bowl. Serve with the garnishes, if using, on the side. Game on!

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