

ULTIMATE CHILLI CON CARNE

Marinade:

- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. mustard (I used English)
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 4 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tsp. mixed spice
- Fresh Thyme sprigs, around 5/6
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 extra picante dried chilli depending on heat (I used 1 as they are fairly hot and I add more chilli later, you can add two here)
- 2 sweet dried peppers
- 1 kilo diced beef meat, braising/casserole meat...something with some fat content so it can be cooked slowly.

Sauce:

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced
- 2 birds eye chillies left whole and pricked with a knife
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 125ml red wine
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 tin plum tomatoes
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 tin red kidney beans, drained
- 50g dark chocolate, I used 72% cocoa

Method

- First make your marinade, it is better to do this the day before and leave overnight, if not make sure you give yourself at least two hours for the meat to marinate.
- Soak the dried chillies in hot water for 10 minutes.
- Blend all of the marinade ingredients to make a paste, add a little water if needed, try and make it as smooth as possible, my cinnamon wasn't ground up but that is fine.
- Coat the meat in this chilli paste, I placed it into a bag and shook it around to get coverage.
- Using a casserole dish or deep sided skillet, add the oil and heat, sauté the onions and celery until soft, then add the garlic and whole chillies.
- Next add the beef and all of its marinade, scrape it all in you don't want to lose any of that flavouring.
- Pour in the wine and cook for a few minutes to let this reduce, then add the vinegar and the tomatoes.
- Fill the tomatoes tin with water and pour this in too.
- Add the sugar and stir.
- Taste the juice, you may not need to season it more as the marinade had salt in it. I added a little bit of cracked pepper. The colour is fairly pale at the moment and don't worry if there's a lot of liquid as it will reduce and become darker. Cover and turn the heat to low and let this cook slowly, stirring every so often.
- After an hour check the beef to see if it is tender.
- Once tender add the peppers, kidney beans and chocolate, turn the heat up a little and cook for 10 minutes more; uncovered. Stir it and you should see the colour become dark like the chocolate.
- Serve with sides, nachos, rice or what ever you fancy.
- If you can I would make this ahead as it tastes so much better once it has sat for a few hours, or cook the day before.