

## THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



### **Beef Barbacoa** (very slightly adapted from The Food Lab on Serious Eats)

About 6 servings

I think the crockpot is a definite possibility here, but it'll take you a lot longer to reduce the liquid to a sauce after the cooking time. That's an easy tradeoff to save 4 hours of oven use when the weather's warm!

If you can't find these exact types of chiles, any combination of mild, fruity and bright-tasting chiles will do, such as guajillo or Colorado. I used a New Mexico, an ancho, and an arbol chile. I couldn't find oxtails either, so I used beef ribs.

1 whole dried New Mexico, costeño, or choricero chili, seeds and stem removed  
1 whole chile ancho or pasilla, seeds and stem removed  
1 whole chile negro, seeds and stem removed  
4 cups low-sodium chicken stock, divided  
3 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil, divided  
1 pound oxtails  
1 small onion, diced  
6 medium cloves garlic, peeled and smashed  
2 teaspoons ground cumin  
½ teaspoon ground cloves  
2 teaspoons dried oregano  
4 chipotle chiles packed in adobo, chopped, with 2 tablespoons adobo sauce  
¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
2 teaspoons fish sauce  
1 whole chuck roast (about 4 pounds)  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 whole bay leaves  
Kosher salt  
Warm corn tortillas, avocados, queso fresco, pickled onions, cilantro, salsa, limes, and other condiments for serving

1. Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and preheat the oven to 275 degrees. Place the dried chiles in the bottom of a large Dutch oven and heat over high heat. Cook, turning the chiles with tongs occasionally, until fragrant and toasted, about 3 minutes. Transfer the chiles to a small saucepan and cover with 2 cups of chicken broth. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce to a simmer, and cook until chiles are completely tender, about 15 minutes. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in the now-empty Dutch oven over high heat until shimmering. Cook the oxtails until they're well-browned on all sides, about 8 minutes total. Remove the oxtails and set aside. Reduce the heat to medium.

3. Add the remaining two tablespoons oil and heat along with the onions and garlic, and cook, stirring frequently, until deep brown and just starting to burn, about 10 minutes. Add the cumin, cloves, and oregano, and cook, stirring constantly until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the chipotle chiles, vinegar, and remaining chicken broth. Scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan, simmer until reduced by about half, then transfer the entire contents to the jar of a blender.

4. Add the soaked chiles and their liquid to the blender along with the fish sauce. Start the blender on low (be careful of blowups!) and slowly increase the speed to high. Puree until smooth, about 1 minute. Set aside.

5. Place the beef roast in the Dutch oven. Add the browned oxtails, 2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper, the bay leaves, and the sauce. Bring to a boil over high heat. Place the lid on the pot, slightly cracked, then transfer to the oven. Cook, turning the beef occasionally, until completely tender and a cake tester or metal skewer inserted into the meat shows little to no resistance, about 4 hours. Discard the bay leaves and oxtails (meat from oxtails can be eaten if desired). Transfer the chuck to a large plate. Return the Dutch oven to the stovetop, and cook, stirring frequently, over medium-high heat until the liquid is reduced to about 1½ cups, about 5 minutes.

6. Beef can be shredded and served immediately or transferred to a sealed container along with the liquid and refrigerate up to five days. When ready to serve, shred into large chunks with your fingers or two forks. Return the beef to a pot along with the sauce. Bring to a simmer and cook, gently stirring and folding until the beef is hot, tender, and coated in sauce. Season to taste with salt. Serve immediately, piling the beef into warm corn tortillas with onions, queso fresco, avocados, cilantro, salsa, limes, or other condiments as desired.