

# How to Make Frito Pie

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Frito pies were invented by the Texas-based Frito Corporation, but adored throughout the Southwestern US.<sup>[1]</sup> You can use your favorite chili recipe, or take this example of a classic Texas red chili.

## Ingredients

### ■ Baked Frito Pie *or* Walking Tacos

- ☐ 3 cups Frito chips (one large bag, or one small bag per person)
- ☐ ½ yellow onion, diced
- ☐ 1 cup (240 mL) sour cream
- ☐ 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- ☐ 1 16-oz (450g) can chili (*or homemade chili, below*)
- ☐ 1 fresh tomato, diced *or* ½ can diced tomato (*optional*)
- ☐ ⅓ head lettuce, shredded (*optional*)

### ■ Texas Red Chili

- ☐ 3 dried chipotle chili peppers
- ☐ 4 dried ancho chili peppers
- ☐ 2 pounds (0.9 kg) ground chuck
- ☐ 1 yellow onion, diced
- ☐ 2.5 cups (950 mL) chicken or beef stock
- ☐ 12 oz (350 mL) beer
- ☐ 1 tbsp (15 mL) cumin
- ☐ 1.5 tbsp (22 mL) corn flour (masa)
- ☐ pepper and salt

### Method 1 of 3: Easy Baked Frito Pie



- 1** Preheat the oven to 350 °F (177 °C). Now's a good time to dice the onions, while you wait.



- 2** Spread most of the Fritos in a baking dish. Use  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the Fritos, or enough to cover the whole pan. Save the rest for the topping.



- 3 Cover with chili.** You can use any kind of canned chili, or make your own using the recipe below.
- Optionally, add diced tomatoes, canned or fresh.



- 4 Bake for 15 minutes.** Once your oven is preheated, put the casserole dish in the oven. Leave it for about fifteen minutes, until the chili is hot.
- For an even easier recipe, add all the ingredients on top of the chili and bake in one sitting.



- 5 Top with other ingredients.** Spread a layer of sour cream over the chili with a spoon. Top with the diced onion, the rest of the Fritos, and the grated cheese. The Fritos on top will stay much crunchier than the Fritos at the bottom of the pan.
- Optionally, sprinkle the sour cream layer with shredded lettuce for a fresher taste.



- 6 Bake for another five minutes.** Return to the oven and bake a few minutes longer, until the cheese is melted. Serve hot.



## Method 2 of 3: Walking Tacos



- 1 Heat chili on the stove.** Pour the can of chili into a pan over medium heat. Cover and let warm, stirring occasionally.
  - You can [make homemade chili](#) instead, or use the recipe below.
  - For more flavor, add diced tomatoes and/or canned beans if the canned chili does not include them. Most Texan chili skips both of these ingredients.<sup>[2]</sup>



- 2 Slit open the side of each Frito bag.** A "walking taco" is a Frito pie served in the Frito bag instead of a bowl. Each person gets one Frito bag. Cut each bag open along the side instead of the top to make a larger opening.



**3 Spoon chili and cheese into each bag.** Spoon the chili directly into the Frito bag, then top with melted cheese. You can leave this as is to keep the chips crunchy, or stir it together for a delicious mess.

- Diced onions and sour cream are optional toppings.
- If you want room for more chili, crush some of the chips first by squeezing the bag.

### Method 3 of 3: Texas Red Chili



**1 Cut and toast the dried chili peppers.** Slice open the peppers and remove the seeds, stem, and white inner flesh. Heat a dry skillet and toast the peppers for about 30 seconds on each side, until dark spots begin to appear. You can skip this step and use chili powder instead, but whole dried chili peppers give a much better flavor.

- Do not touch your eyes until you've washed your hands thoroughly. Wear gloves if you have sensitive skin.
- If you like extra-spicy, chili, set aside some of the seeds and add them once the chili is cooking.





**2 Soak the peppers in hot water.** Submerge in 1 cup (240 mL) of hot water, not boiling water, for 5–10 minutes. Puree the peppers and water in a blender and set them aside for now.<sup>[3]</sup>

- If you think you'll use them again, you can make a large batch in advance. For maximum flavor, soak for 30 minutes and simmer in oil, covered, for another 20 minutes.



**3 Brown ground chuck in a large frying pan.** Add the beef to a hot frying pan and cook until brown. Stir occasionally and break it into even-sized pieces with a wooden spoon. For best results, brown in small batches, so most of the beef can touch the pan surface. This will take a few minutes per batch.

- Use a nonstick pan, or nonstick cooking spray.





**4 Cook the onions until translucent.** Add the diced onions to the hot pan and cook until translucent, about five minutes.



**5 Combine chili ingredients in a large saucepan.** Combine chili pepper puree, beef, and onions in a large pot. The larger and heavier the pot, the better the meat texture will be.<sup>[4]</sup> Add the chicken or beef stock, beer, cumin, a grind of pepper, and several pinches of salt.

- If food has stuck to the frying pan, **deglaze** it with some of the stock and add it to the chili.
- Red ale or stout is a good choice.<sup>[5]</sup> Replace with more stock for a nonalcoholic version; otherwise, about 25% of the alcohol will remain.<sup>[6]</sup>



- 6 Simmer until the meat is tender.** Bring to a boil, then simmer uncovered until the meat is tender and the chili is thick, 45–60 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- For extra flavor, instead cover with a slightly ajar lid and cook for up to 3 hours. [7]



- 7 Mix in corn flour paste (optional).** This makes a thicker, less greasy chili. Add the corn flour to a bowl and spoon in some of the chili broth. Stir until it forms a paste, then pour it into the chili. Stir until thoroughly combined.





**8 Adjust spices and serve.** Taste the chili. Add more salt, pepper, or cumin if desired. Let it sit off the heat to absorb more flavor and cool enough to eat. Serve with Fritos and grated cheese.

- Squeeze a lime over it for extra flavor.
- For sweet chili, stir in 1 tbsp (15 mL) brown sugar and 1 tbsp (15 mL) white vinegar, then let simmer another ten minutes.[8]



**9** Finished.





## Tips

- Add spices or other ingredients to customize the recipe, or follow [a different chili recipe](#).
- You can use any type of chili pepper you like. For best results, combine two or more peppers with different flavors. Try a smoky *chipotle* or *guajillo* with a fruity *ancho* or *pasillo*, and an extra-hot *pequin* or *arbol*.<sup>[9]</sup>



## Warnings

- In the UK and some other regions, corn starch is sold as "cornflour." You need actual flour made from corn for this recipe.

## References

1. ↑ <http://www.houstoniamag.com/eat-and-drink/articles/the-complicated-history-of-the-frito-pie-january-2014>
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9. ↑ <http://www.serious-eats.com/2015/01/how-to-clean-and-prepare-dried-chilies-chili-powder-substitute.html>
10. Chili recipe adapted in part from <http://steamykitchen.com/20444-frito-pie-texas-chili-recipe.html>

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