

## "SMOKIN' ON THE HARD--SAUCE"

### INGREDIENTS:

2 cups dried De Arbol Chili pods - stems and some seeds removed  
1 1/2 cups warm water  
2 cloves garlic, pressed  
1 teaspoon ground cumin and/or 1 teaspoon of coriander seed  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon packed brown sugar  
1 teaspoon cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon of oregano (optional)

### INGREDIENT NOTES:

These chilies are small, red, dried -- little finger size -**MOST IMPORTANTLY - DRIED.** Gotta' say, in South East Asia - its hard to find DRIED - that aren't *re-humidified*. You can use the "count them method" if you want. Put about 50 or so in a 10 inch pan - but basically, you want to fill the pan you are using.



Cumin or Coriander -- either give a special pizzazz that makes it nice  
Brown sugar is smoother than regular sugar - but you can use either.  
Vinegar - this may be up to a cup. This is where you get to experiment -- extra can be added after blending and tasting.

## TOOLS:

Grill -- Your heat source

Cast Iron Pan (10 inch) or griddle -- this is what you cook in/on

Gloves - latex etc Stay safe!

Blender - Mix and smooth



NOTE: The Beers are ingredients for the chef - not the sauce.  
Mask, Glove, Shades. **Essential safety equipment!**

## DIRECTIONS:

### **WARNING --- READ ALL STEPS BEFORE STARTING!**

1. Remove stems and some of the seeds from the dried chili pods. Wear gloves - wash your hands - don't touch your eyes! Technique: Cut the top off of each chili to remove the stem. Now, slit the side of the chili to split it. Dump the seeds - and scrape the lining of the pods. Now there are a lot of these little suckers in 2 cups - so you're gonna get lazy -- thats OK. Just top 'em and dump the seeds.



**NOW, GO OUTSIDE!** Fire up the gas grill or what ever you are going to use to toast the pods - **don't do it inside!** Get a 10 inch cast iron pan, griddle - or whatever.

2. Heat the cast-iron skillet over medium - medium high heat. Add the chilies.

3. **Care for your eyes! Stand UP WIND!**

4. Toast the chili pods in the skillet until lightly brown, about 2 to 3 minutes. You will smell the chilies as they cook. Get close - but stay safely upwind!



NOTE: Any seeds that are in the pan - will darken and brown first. Use this as a indicator of when you are finished. If the seeds burn same results - bad batch! It does not take very long. If you burn them - pitch it out and start over. The burnt flavor will be in the sauce and very bitter.

5. When they're done == quench the chilies in the pan with the water. **Stand UP WIND!**  
**Watch the steam - its potent! Clears your sinuses and melts your eyeballs.**



*Look! It peeled the paint off the neighbor's boat!*

6. Transfer the chili pods and water to a container. Let them soak for 30-40 minutes. These little hot puppies like to float - so use a spoon, plate, or bowl to weight them down. At this point you are reconstituting -- so they gotta get wet!



7. Taste the water after 30 minutes. Bitter?? ---Throw out the water and use fresh for the next step - else use what you got. You can save a little and use as a chili stock or for a nice beef marinade too.

8. Place the chilies (and water old or new), the garlic, cumin, salt, brown sugar, salt, and vinegar all in a food processor. Puree the mixture until smooth. An alternative -- you can blend the chilies and liquid just into a paste and use as needed. This makes a potent starter for a number of dishes - Like my buddy Steve's baby back ribs. The plan here is to get to a salsa-like consistency for tacos, chips etc. So, add liquid as you like while blending.



***Looks Good? -- UMMM...TASTES GREAT!!!***

If its done right - you get a nice, *smooth, sweet-hot burn that rolls from the tip of your tongue to the back of your throat*. Heat - not flame! Good enough to make you have some more!

**Mr. Science says:**

"Its the sugar and vinegar that helps the heat roll through your mouth."

## **IMPORTANT TIPS:**

No tomatoes - it will keep shelf stable because the vinegar and sugar will preserve it. If concerned about the garlic or oregano going off over time - then refrigerate it. But we've had it on the shelf for months at a time. My friend Steve saved some for several years!

## CLOSING NOTES:

The pictures were shot as part of my new tradition -- to make a batch when ON THE HARD! I made a double batch - and only a few minor changes to the recipe.

1. I did the chilies in 2 batches. So the first was soaking a bit longer - no problem.
2. I added equal amounts of Cumin and Coriander and Oregano - using the amounts for each batch per above.
3. Doubled the amount of Brown sugar - this was after tasting.
4. Finished up with about 3 tablespoons of cider vinegar. Thats the beauty of tasting!

It is Hot - but not a *Burn and Blister* - very pleasant, full mouth warmth.

### WHO SAYS, "*Its a hard life on the hard?*"

Ask *hotheads/chili-heads* why they eat hot foods. You'll get many answers. BUT the TRUTH has got to be endorphin *RUSH*. Its like Brain Freeze - BUT IN REVERSE! ARGHHHHH! Your tongue and mouth are just the "warm up." When it hits the sinus and goes straight to the brain. Like a great hot mustard or wasabi. Endorphins - natural opiates - are released by the brain to signal pleasure rather than pain. Done right the *RUSH* will mask the flame and fire -- and take you back for more.

You can eat hot food, be breathing hard, sweating, your lips on fire - and smiling because you really enjoy it!

Me, I like the taste, the heat - the RUSH. Smokier the better. Thats whats great with Mario's. You control the roasting of the dried peppers. Darker but not burnt - a nice chipotle! I reckon if its not smokey enough to your liking - you could add a little liquid smoke --- but that would be cheating. **Eat the batch and make another!**

ENJOY!

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