One of our favorite regions of food is New Mexican. This is really distinctive from Mexican as anyone who has been there knows. However, it is surprisingly hard to find good restaurants in California that serve New Mexican food. There is the classic Anita's in Fullerton and the not quite as good Zia Cafe in Santa Barbara. But that is about all I know of. And neither are as good as you can get at the small Duran's pharmacy lunch counter in Albuquerque.

This year, we bought and roasted 25 lbs or so of New Mexican green chilis (which we can luckily get now in bulk in season in CA) and made green sauce. That has been great. But it got me in the mood for a red sauce as well. The sauce is really easy. I buy a bag of New Mexican dried red chilis at the local carniceria. You can mix and match the dried chilis if you want. But I just use a dozen or so of these.

1. I toast the chilis on a cast iron skillet until I have peppersprayed myself into a coughing fit, then put let them cool. Then cut them open and remove seeds and cut the dried out meat into strips. These go into a small pot with boiling water. Once all the chilis are in, I add enough water to cover and let simmer 15 minutes.

2. This all goes into a blender. Careful, because the liquid is hot in temperature and chili heat. Blend until it is all broken up and liquid (3 minutes or so).

3. Pour this into a strainer and press all the liquid through into a bowl. There will be some skin and solids left in a paste that you discard.

4. Next, saute a small onion and clove of garlic in a small pot. Once soft, add the chili water.

5. Add 1 tsp Cumin, 1 tsp salt, and simmer a bit.

6. Take out 1/4 cup of the liquid and add 2 tbsp flour and make a paste. Add that back into sauce to thicken.

7. Cool and store in the fridge and use for great enchilada sauce or for my other favorite... Chile con Carne.

Chile con Carne

This is so easy to make once you have the chili sauce above. If you make this with pork, it is called Carne Adovada. With beef I think it is just Chile con Carne. But the idea, is you get a nice hunk of roasting meat. We buy local rump roast from Old Creek Ranch. You then slice it up into 2 inch cubes.

These cubes get browned in a pan in batches then set aside in a bowl.

Then I add an onion to the pan to get up all the bits off the bottom. Once it is soft, add the meat back in with juices. Add a bit of salt and a bay leaf, then cover with water. This simmers for an hour or so. Stir once in a while to make sure it doesn't get dry.

Once the hour is up, the meat will still be tough. But the magic is about to happen. Add 1 cup of your homemade red chili sauce and mix in well. Then let simmer another hour. It will really start to thicken and bubble as the meat breaks down.

At some point around 2 hours, the meat just magically softens and thickens the sauce to something wonderful.
You can serve it right away as chili. I like it over roasted potatoes. As above with some cilantro.

But the next day it will be even better. I usually use the leftovers for Huevos Rancheros.

Enjoy. Also try it with pork shoulder for awesome carne adovada.