

Kitchen Korner

Cook With Beer To Add A Splash Of Flavor

(NAPSA)—One of the main reasons beer makes such an ideal ingredient for cooking is because beer is actually food. Novices and five-star chefs alike get their creative juices flowing when adding beer to their dishes.

The flavor that beer will impart to food depends on its style and ingredients. So, the natural first step when cooking with beer is to select the appropriate style.

Because a darker beer will produce a more assertive flavor, start with a familiar, lighter beer in recipes before moving on to more complex brews. For basic pairings, try wheat ales in fish and poultry, fruit beers in desserts, and strong ales or darker lagers in meat dishes.

Some of the areas where beer can add flavor include:

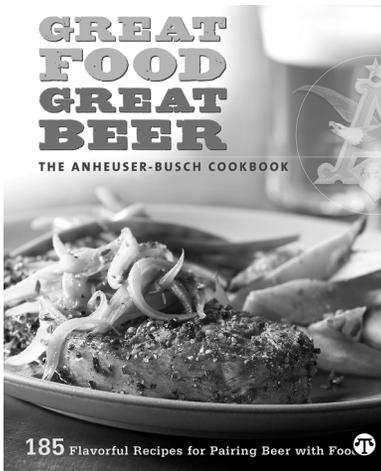
- **Baking**—Malty and hoppy yeast flavors add zest to breads and pancakes while keeping their textures light.

- **Grilling**—Meats and vegetables become more succulent with a beer marinade. Try simmering ingredients in a pale American lager for a juicy, flavorful enhancement to grilled lobster.

- **Frying**—Add full-flavored brews to the batter of fried foods. The beer enhances the food's flavors, especially in juicy, sweet-flavored shrimp or mild white fish.

"Because beer is not overly sweet and tends to exhibit a balanced bitter finish, preparing sweeter foods or using beer to balance out the richness of creamier dishes works well," says George Reisch, brewmaster, Anheuser-Busch, Inc.

Here's a recipe that lets you enjoy the flavor of beer on the grill:



Ranch Chili

Serve with an American-Style Premium Lager, such as Michelob.

- 2 cans (14½ ounces each) beef stock, plus more if needed**
- 6 to 8 dried New Mexico chiles (about 5 inches long and 1½ to 2 ounces total)**
- 12 slices (12 ounces) bacon, chopped**
- 4 pounds boneless beef chuck**
- Salt**
- 2 large onions, chopped**
- ¼ cup minced garlic**
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin**
- 1½ teaspoons dried oregano**
- 2 cups (16 ounces) Michelob**
- 4 fresh poblano chiles (10 ounces total)**

1. Pour 1 can of the stock into a small saucepan and heat over medium heat just until simmering. Stem and seed the dried chiles, then rinse and cut into chunks. In a blender, pour the hot stock over the chiles and let stand for 10 minutes, then process to a smooth puree.

2. Meanwhile, in a large, heavy saucepan, cook the bacon over medium-high heat,

stirring often, until browned, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels. Discard all but 2 tablespoons fat from the pan.

3. Rinse the beef and pat dry with paper towels. Cut the beef into 1½-inch chunks, trimming off any large lumps of fat. Sprinkle the beef lightly with salt. Working in batches, add the beef in a single layer to the pan and cook, turning until browned all over, 5 to 6 minutes per batch. Transfer the beef to a bowl.

4. Add the onion, garlic, cumin, and oregano to the pan and cook, stirring often, until the onion is limp and beginning to brown, 5 to 6 minutes. Return the beef and bacon to the pan. Add the chile puree, beer and the remaining 1 can stock. Bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits. Cover, lower the heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour. Uncover and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the beef is very tender when pierced with a knife and the sauce is thickened, 1 to 1½ hours longer. (If the sauce gets too thick before the beef is done, add more stock as needed.)

5. While the beef mixture cooks, preheat the broiler. In a roasting pan, broil the poblano chiles 4 inches from the heating element, turning once, until charred all over, 5 to 7 minutes on each side. When cool enough to handle, peel, stem, seed, and coarsely chop. Stir into the chili during the last 30 minutes of cooking.

Cook's Tip: Top the chili with chopped onions and fresh cilantro. Serve with avocado, crumbled cheese, sour cream, and warm flour tortillas.

Makes 6 servings