

INSIDER

CHEFS SHARE 9 OF THEIR FAVORITE WAYS TO UPGRADE CANNED CHILI

OCTOBER 16, 2022
BY ALYSSA TOWNS SWANTKOSKI



Adding beer to your chili can make it more complex.

Beer can give the chili a malty flavor. Sometimes it's easier to opt for a can of chili, so several chefs shared some simple ways to upgrade the convenient meal. Jim Dunleavy, director of food and beverage at Eatzi's Market and Bakery, told Insider that beer is one easy, yet impactful addition. "Adding beer to chili will add complexity by imparting a malty flavor from the sugars and other ingredients," Dunleavy said. "Just make sure you let it simmer, so the alcohol will cook out."

Mix in cocoa for a deeper flavor.

Just a dash of cocoa powder can make a difference. Sometimes canned chili can lack flavor, but Dunleavy said cocoa powder can add a new level of richness. "Similar to a mole sauce, unsweetened cocoa will deepen the flavor of chili," Dunleavy said. "You don't need much — start with a dash and add more if desired."

Fresh, chopped ingredients are excellent chili toppings.

Since the canned meal often doesn't include a variety of textures, Dunleavy recommended adding freshly chopped ingredients for a tasty contrast. "Adding fresh ingredients — like diced onions, cilantro, and jalapenos — will take any canned chili to another level," Dunleavy said. "The fresh burst of flavor will brighten and elevate the chili while also adding great texture and crunch."