

Garden Venison Chili-Soup

Instant Pot • 6 bowls • About 40 minutes • Catawissa garden harvest

Lean venison

High-fiber lentils

Garden peppers

One-pot cook

Hamburger soup meets chili verde: brown venison, then pressure-cook tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, orange lentils, and quinoa. Wheat berries and rice need different times—cook them separately.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground venison
- 1 Tbsp olive or avocado oil
- 1 onion, diced (freezer onion is fine)
- 3–4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3–4 garden tomatoes, chopped (or 1 can diced)
- 4–6 ripe tomatillos, husked, rinsed, chopped
- 1–2 bell or frying peppers, chopped
- 1 jalapeño + 1 chili pepper, minced (seed to tame heat)
- ½–¾ cup dry orange lentils, rinsed
- ■ cup quinoa, rinsed
- 1–1½ cups frozen corn
- 1–2 cups cooked beans, if you have them
- 4 cups broth (or water + 1 Tbsp tomato paste/bouillon)
- 1 tsp salt, ½ tsp black pepper, 1 tsp paprika or chili powder
- Herbs: 1 tsp oregano, ½ tsp thyme, pinch rosemary
- Parsley and basil at the end
- Optional: lime, cider vinegar, Worcestershire, or a small chopped apple

BEFORE YOU START

- Husk tomatillos and wash off the sticky film.
- Stay under the Instant Pot half-full line; lentils foam.
- Venison is lean—oil on Sauté helps browning and moisture.
- Do not add corn, basil, or parsley until after pressure.

INSTANT POT METHOD

- 1 Sauté oil, onion, and peppers 4–5 min. Add garlic 30 sec, then venison; brown and break it up.
- 2 Stir in tomato paste, oregano, thyme, paprika, salt, and pepper 1 min. Splash in broth and scrape the bottom (prevents a burn notice).
- 3 Add tomatoes, tomatillos, rinsed lentils, quinoa, remaining broth, and beans if using.
- 4 High pressure 10 minutes. Natural release 10 minutes, then vent.
- 5 Stir in frozen corn and chopped parsley/basil. Sauté 3–5 min. Taste; add acid, salt, or more chile.
- 6 Too thick? Add water. Too thin? Sauté uncovered—orange lentils keep thickening as they sit.

GRAIN RULE

- Orange lentils (3–12 min): use these—they thicken the soup and add protein and fiber.
- Quinoa: ■ cup in this same 10-min cycle. More turns gummy.
- Wheat berries: 30 min high pressure on their own. Stir 1 cup cooked berries into bowls, or freeze extras.
- Rice: keep as a side. It overcooks in this pot.

FREEZER EXTRAS

- Onion, celery, carrots, mixed veg
- Tomato paste, roasted tomatoes, salsa
- Green beans, zucchini, kale, spinach
- Potato or squash cubes (add before pressure)
- Bone broth; frozen garlic
- Apple or a pinch of dark chocolate for venison

CATAWISSA FOREST (ID FIRST)

- Lamb’s-quarters or dandelion greens at the end
- Spicebush berries instead of allspice
- Staghorn sumac for lemony tartness
- Wild mint with the basil
- Known hen- or chicken-of-the-woods only
- Skip anything you cannot identify

GROW / FREEZE LATER

- Onions, garlic, carrots, celery, potatoes
- Kale, cilantro, extra hot peppers to dry
- Tomatillos: husk, roast, freeze
- Cooked wheat berries in 1-cup packs
- Finish bowls with parsley, lime, or yogurt
- Wellness: lean meat, fiber, lycopene, herbs