



Homemade Beef Stew

Prep Time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 1 1/2 to 2 hours

There are as many recipes for stew as there are cookbooks in the world. This is one of the easier ones. You can use it as a base from which to develop one that is yours. Try grass-fed lamb or veal or venison together with grass-fed beef. Add mushrooms and pearl onions to the stew while it is cooking. Some people even like to add a can of stewed tomatoes. Whatever. It's a hard dish to screw up. Just make sure you brown the meat first. Browning develops the deep, caramelized flavors that are essential for a rich-tasting stew.

Ingredients

2 pounds [stew meat](#), preferably grass-fed beef
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion
6 medium carrots
4 sprigs of fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
1 sprig of fresh parsley
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 piece of cheese cloth
2 cans of beef stock
1 cup water (more if needed).
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 medium potatoes

Directions

1. Thinly slice the onion and two of the carrots.
2. Heat olive oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium-high heat until hot.
3. Dry the beef cubes in paper towels. They won't brown as well if they're wet.

4. Begin adding the meat to pot and brown on all sides. Don't crowd the meat or it will steam rather than sizzle. Each batch should brown for two minutes or so.
5. Remove the pieces as they brown and put them in a three-quart soup pot.
6. Sauté the sliced onion and carrot in the same fat in the skillet. You may need to add a little more olive oil.
7. Wrap the sautéed onions and carrots along with the thyme, bay leaf and parsley in the cheesecloth and tie. (For easy removal later. They are for flavoring only.)
8. Add beef broth to the meat and bring the mixture to a simmer.
9. Skim off the scum that rises to the top.
10. Add the bundle of onion, carrots and spices to the broth and enough water to cover everything.
11. Simmer approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours until beef is cooked.
12. While the stew is simmering, peel the potatoes and the other four carrots and cut into bite-sized chunks.
13. When the beef is done, remove the cheesecloth bundle from the stew and add the potatoes and carrots. Simmer for another 15 minutes.
14. Combine 1 cup stew broth with the 3 tablespoons of flour in a small bowl. Mix with fork or whisk and add back to stew. Continue heating another 15 minutes until thickened and the potatoes are tender.
15. Serve with good bread and a hearty red wine.

Makes 8 servings.