

Beef or Lamb Stew

(Serves 4 persons)

I always like to thicken the stew about twenty minutes before it is due to be served. If it is thickened at the start then it is quite likely the ingredients will settle at the bottom of the pan or slow cooker and could burn.

For a Beef stew season with mixed herbs and bay leaves; for a Lamb stew season with mixed herbs and Rosemary. For a hotter tasting stew leave out the Rosemary and use the spices mentioned below.

You will need the following ingredients :

900g (2lbs) casserole stewing steak (or diced lamb),

2 large onions peeled and chopped,

3 garlic cloves crushed,

2 large carrots peeled and cut into chunks or slices,

1 tablespoon of pearl barley and pea mix,

1 tablespoon of red lentils,

1/2 a swede peeled and cut into chunks,

(2 tablespoons of chopped green fine beans are optional),

(200ml red wine is also optional),

Small chestnut mushrooms, chopped or quartered according to size and taste.

1 tablespoon of tomato puree,

500ml (18 fl oz) hot beef stock (oxo cube or similar),

2 teaspoons mixed herbs, plus rosemary or bay leaves as mentioned above,

2 tablespoons of Worcester Sauce,

Black (or white) pepper and salt to taste.

(Optional extras can include crushed chillis, garam masala, or cumin, to your taste, if so, do not include the Rosemary if making a Lamb stew.)

(If making an African stew add 2" of grated ginger, 1/2 teaspoon cloves, and a sprinkling of cayenne pepper.)

Method:

Put all the ingredients into a large pan and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat and simmer on a very low light for two hours, stirring from time to time. Taste the stew occasionally to get the right taste you need and adjust if necessary with the herbs or spices etc. If using a slow cooker leave to cook for a three hours or more.

20 minutes before serving thicken the stew and add the dumplings.

Put three heaped teaspoons of gravy powder into a cup adding 2 teaspoons of cornflour. Mix to a loose paste with cold water. Add to the stew stirring all the time and it will then thicken in a few minutes. Add more of this thickening, a little at a time, if the stew is not thick enough for your requirements.

(For an African Beef or Lamb stew: add two tablespoons of smooth peanut butter at this stage.)

Serve with boiled potatoes, and greens if required, and dumplings made with fresh chopped parsley in the mixture. (See dumpling recipe but don't use the raisins or sugar!!) Put the dumplings into the top of the stew after you have thickened it until they are cooked through, light and fluffy - check by putting a knife into the middle and it should come out clean and not "gooey"!

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www.davidsemporium.co.uk/recipesindex.html