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Brothy Irish Stew

By Susie Iventosch



Petar's Irish Stew Photo Susie Iventosch

RECIPES

Included here are two versions of Irish stew. Petar's is a thick, hearty stew made with lamb veggies and barley. The "Brothy" stew, a compilation of several different recipes and made with Guinness stout beer, is a bit more "brothy" and delicious served with thick slices of French bread.

Brothy Irish Stew

(Serves six or so)

Ingredients

- 2 ½ pounds shoulder lamb chop, or shoulder block, cut into small chunks*
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup Guinness, or other stout beer
- 3 or 4 large new potatoes cut into quarters
- 1 parsnip, peeled and cut into medium-sized chunks
- 1 pound baby carrots
- 2 cups pearl onions, parboiled and peeled (any color is fine)
- 1 ½ cups beef or chicken stock

3 tablespoons parsley, chopped

2 teaspoons fresh thyme

2 bay leaves

Roux for thickening (1 tablespoon melted butter and 2 tablespoons flour mixed into a paste with ½ teaspoon salt and 2 tablespoons stout beer)

Directions

Season lamb with salt and pepper. Heat oil in Dutch oven, or other large pot with tight-fitting lid, and sear lamb for 2-3 minutes, just to seal in juices. Remove lamb from pot and set aside.

In same pot, pour beer and boil for one minute, scraping up any bits of leftover meat. Place lamb back in pan. Cover with stock. Bring pot to boil and immediately reduce to a simmer. Cover pot and simmer for 45 minutes. Open lid and layer veggies on top of lamb leaving potatoes for top layer. Cover and continue to cook on low simmer for another hour or until meat is tender and falls easily from bones and veggies are cooked through.

If you want to thicken the sauce a wee bit, stir roux into stew and heat until slightly thickened.

Serve hot with thick slices of French bread.

NOTE

*Since I am no expert on meat cuts, it's always a bit of a challenge when looking for just the right cut for certain dishes. I rely on the advice of my butcher to get it right! I went into Lunardi's (939-6477 ext. 3) meat department looking for lamb shoulder meat for my Irish stew, and the very knowledgeable and friendly butcher, Dan Kidd, told me the best piece of the lamb to use for Irish stew is the lamb shoulder block. This is the end piece leftover from cutting the lamb shoulder arm and lamb shoulder blade chops. This particular section is very flavorful, but it has a lot of bones, which make it even better for stewing, but difficult to cut into small pieces at home. Dan said that is never a problem, because they are happy to split it, seam out the fat and cut it into stew sized pieces on the butcher saw. All you have to do is ask, or call ahead. He said it is one of the most flavorful parts of the lamb, too.

Petar's Irish Stew

(Enough for a crowd)

Ingredients

¼ cup cooking oil or olive oil (or butter)

5 pounds lamb shoulder pieces

8 ounces barley

20 ounces small white onions

24 ounces white turnips

4 medium carrots, sliced

1 pound celery, sliced

3 medium potatoes

Salt and pepper to taste

Chopped fresh mint

Directions

Cut lamb into desired size pieces. Sauté in pan with half of the oil. When meat is browned, remove from pan and add vegetables to the cooking oil and sauté, adding more oil, if necessary.

Meanwhile, in a separate pot, bring about 4 quarts of water to boil and add barley.

Reduce heat and cook for 35-40 minutes, until barley is almost cooked. Add the barley and cooking liquid to the meat and vegetable mixture with some chopped mint. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for one to two hours. Serve with more chopped mint, or mint leaves as garnish.

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