

# Summer Beef Stew

- 2 pounds collagen-laden beef (oxtail, brisket, chuck, short-ribs), chopped large
- salt
- black pepper
- cooking oil
- white sugar
- 2 carrots
- 2 potatoes
- 4-5 roma or plum tomatoes
- 2 shallots
- 2-4 jalapeno peppers
- one large onion
- 2-3 stalks of celery
- an onion
- a red and fruity wine (maybe Zinfandel, Merlot, Sangria or a young Pinot Noir)
- 3 dried bay leaves
- 1 pear or apple
- fish sauce
- mace
- cinnamon
- Fresh thyme
- cornstarch
- 2-4 scallions, sliced thin

Season your meat with salt and pepper. I like to leave spread out on a plate in the refrigerator, open to the air, so that the meat dries out and browns better.

Bring a little cooking oil to a high heat in your pan, but not so high that it smokes. Brown your beef. You may want to sprinkle a little white sugar to help it brown.

Peel and dice your carrots, and peel and quarter your potatoes. Put in a pot, covered by salt water, and bring to a boil. Parboil for 15 minutes or so, and cool with cold running water or in an ice water bath.

Bring a pot of boiling water to a boil. Drop your tomatoes in, let the boil resume, and let cook for 40-50 seconds. Cool with cold running water or in an ice bath. Peel the tomatoes, and dice them.

Mince your shallots and jalapenos. Dice your celery and onions.

In your stew pot, add a little cooking oil over high heat (again, not smoking). Start cooking your shallots and jalapenos. After they start to soften, add the celery and onions. Again, you may want

to sprinkle a little white sugar on to help them brown.

Drain off as much oil as you can. Return the pot full of vegetables to the stove-top, and add a lot of fruity red wine(maybe half a bottle). Add your beef, potatoes, carrots and tomatoes to the pot. Add your bay leaves. Add a pear or apple, washed but not peeled, and cut in half (making sure that there are no seeds left). Add enough water to the pot to bring over the top of your ingredients, and heat over a medium heat until it starts to simmer. Adjust your salt and pepper while the broth is heating up.

Add just a little fish sauce. You shouldn't be able to taste the sauce directly, but it should enhance the flavor of the meat. Maybe a teaspoon or so, but I would start with a smaller amount. Season with just a little ground mace and ground cinnamon.

Let it stew and simmer for a long time, mostly uncovered. Add water as needed. Once your fruit is thinking about falling apart, remove it and the bay leaves from the stew. Keep the stew stewing. Wash the thyme, bind the thyme twigs together and throw into the stew.

Keep stewing slowly. At this point, you can skim the fat off the top, by painstakingly running a spoon across the top, If you don't need the stew for some time you could use a strainer to separate your broth from your meat and vegetables, leaving the broth in a tall thin container in the fridge to cool, skimming the fat off after it has congealed -- if you do this, then after you have skimmed the fat off you can put your broth and meat/vegetables back in the pot and heat up again.

When you are getting close to meal-time, remove a cup or so of stock from the pot whisk in some cornstarch, and return the thickened mixture to the stew. You'll probably use a tablespoon - - more if you like it very thick, but you can repeat this process until the soup is thickened to your taste. Stir for a bit, so that the stew thickens properly.

Top with scallions and serve.

Serves: 6-8. Serve with the other half-bottle

Preparation time: 4 hours (if you're smart, you'll begin a day in advance)

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