

Beef and beer casserole

The wonderful thing about cooking a casserole at this time of the year is that after spending 20 minutes (or less) preparing it, all you have to do is pop it into a low oven (160 °C / 320 °F or Gas mark 2) for a couple of hours, then serve without further effort when the family return home needing a warm meal and nourishment.

One of the great things about a dish such as this is that if you follow the basic principles for making a casserole such as browning the beef and vegetables before adding beer and stock, and then adding some vegetables such as mushrooms at the end you don't need to do much else. How the dish turns out depends on your own personal touches as you really can make it up as you go, adding extra vegetables, herbs, lentils, even potatoes if you want to pad it out.

To serve 4 to 6 people you will need

- Half bottle Hobgoblin and 250 ml dark beef stock.
- 2lb 4oz/ 1 kg diced braising beef
- A little oil to fry beef and vegetables
- 1 oz flour
- 2 medium onions fine chopped
- 4 carrots sliced reasonably fine
- 4 sticks celery rough chopped
- 4 oz/ 100g chopped mushrooms
- 400g tinned tomatoes - chopped
- 1 dspn tomato purée
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cloves garlic chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 sprigs parsley - chopped fine
- Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season.

Method

- Turn the oven to 160°C /320°F or gas mark 2.
- Having diced the beef, scatter the cubes with flour.
- Place enough oil into a large frying pan to cover the bottom and heat.
- Once the oil reaches a high temperature add the diced beef and let it cook until it sizzles and begins to brown, then spoon into a large casserole dish.
- Now add the vegetables to frying pan, pouring in a little more oil if needed.
- Once the vegetables begin to brown, add them to the casserole dish along with the tinned tomatoes also the tomato paste, then the beer and stock.
- Stir well, add bay leaves, parsley and thyme leaves, season, and bring to the boil. Place a lid on top of the casserole dish, lower the heat and allow to simmer in the oven for about two hours.

- Taste, adjust seasoning and serve once the beef is cooked and the sauce flavoursome.
- If cooked 24 hours before needed you will find that the taste will have mellowed as the various flavours infuse into the into one another.