

Hearty "Beefy" Stew with Herbed Dumplings

Servings: 4-6

Cook Time: About 1.5 hours

This Hearty "Beefy" Stew with Herbed Dumplings is an unforgettable centerpiece for a cozy Thanksgiving meal. With flavors layered from caramelized onions, earthy mushrooms, and tender root vegetables, this stew embodies the warmth and richness of the holiday season. A touch of red wine, Worcestershire, and smoked paprika adds depth, while herbs like rosemary, thyme, and bay leaf fill the kitchen with an aroma that's festive and comforting.

Topped with soft, herby dumplings that cook directly in the stew, each bite is a perfect mix of savory and satisfying. For an extra touch of indulgence, ladle this stew over creamy mashed potatoes—turning it into a Thanksgiving feast that feels both traditional and refreshingly unique.

Serve it to loved ones with sides of seasonal vegetables and sourdough bread. This dish invites everyone to slow down and savor a truly heartwarming holiday meal.

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp olive oil (or vegetable broth for a no-oil option)
- 2 cups sweet or yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup bread flour or whole wheat flour
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 3/4 cup dry red wine
- 6 cups vegan beef-flavored broth or vegetable broth
- 2 cups cremini or baby bella (brown) mushrooms, sliced to match other vegetables
- 2 stalks celery, sliced 1/4-inch thick
- 1 1/2 lbs potatoes, cut into 3/4-inch chunks
- 1 cup baby carrots (slice plump carrots in half diagonally; leave thin carrots whole; or use adult carrots, sliced into 1/4-inch diagonal pieces)

- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped (or 1/2 tsp dried), removed after cooking
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce or vegan steak sauce
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp blackstrap molasses
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 15-oz can of Lima beans (or any white bean) or a 10 oz package of plant-based meat alternatives, such as Beyond Meat bites, cut into chunks, or any other plant based sausage

For the Herby Dumplings

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour (or gluten-free blend)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp fresh rosemary, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup unsweetened almond or oat milk
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Instructions:

1. Caramelize the Onions

In a large Dutch oven (a wide one, such as a Le Creuset, works best), heat olive oil over medium heat. Add the sliced sweet or yellow onion. Stir occasionally and cook for about 15 minutes until caramelized. Add the balsamic vinegar for deeper caramelization and cook for another 5 minutes. You will need to add some broth during the cooking process to keep the onions from sticking, as the pan will get dry as you cook.

2. Add Garlic and Tomato Paste

Stir in the garlic and cook for 2 minutes until fragrant. Add the tomato paste and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to develop a deep, rich flavor. Add a tablespoon of broth if it gets too dry but try to “dry-cook” the paste as much as possible. It enhances the flavor of the tomato paste.

3. Deglaze with Wine

Pour in the red wine, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot, and cook for a few minutes to let the alcohol evaporate. If you prefer not to, use broth.

4. **Add Mushrooms**

Add the cremini or baby bella mushrooms and cook for 10 minutes until they soften and release moisture.

5. **Thicken with Flour and add Broth**

Sprinkle the flour mixture over the vegetables and stir well. Add 1 cup of broth and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently to form a smooth, thick base. You add part of the broth so that mixing the flour becomes easier, making sure there are no large clumps.

6. **Add Vegetables and Seasonings**

Add celery, potatoes, carrots, thyme, bay leaf, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, smoked paprika, blackstrap molasses, and black pepper. Pour in the remaining broth, stir well, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for about 25 minutes until the potatoes and carrots are tender. At the very end, add the peas and allow just to warm up and soften a little. You don't want to pulverize the peas into oblivion – keep them firm. They will continue to cook even after serving.

7. **Add Beans or Plant-based Meat Alternative**

Stir in the Lima beans or vegan sausage/Beyond Meat bites and cook for an additional 10 minutes. I prefer the Beyond Meat bites for a festive occasion like Thanksgiving or Christmas. For regular meals, I opt for beans.

8. **Prepare Dumplings**

In a medium bowl, mix flour, baking powder, chopped rosemary, parsley, and salt. Add the milk and olive oil, stirring until a wet dough forms. Make 5-6 dumplings (or smaller ones, offering each person 2 dumplings).

9. **Add Dumplings to Stew**

Drop spoonfuls of dumpling dough on top of the simmering stew, spacing them evenly. Cover tightly and cook for 15 minutes without lifting the lid. The dumplings should be fluffy and firm.

10. **Serve:**

Remove the bay leaf and rosemary sprig and ladle the stew into bowls with a dumpling on top. Garnish with extra black pepper if desired (recommended). Our favorite way to serve this is over mash potatoes in a wide soup bowl, served with freshly ground black pepper and some chopped parsley or thyme leaves.

Notes

- **Vegetable cut:** Try to make the vegetables the same size for a delicious spoonful carrying a little bit of every ingredient. Try not to make the vegetables so big that you have to cut through them with a spoon or a knife.

- **Carrots:** If using baby carrots, slice any that are plump in half on a diagonal. If you're using large carrots, peel and slice them into 1/4-inch diagonal pieces for even cooking.
- **Dutch Oven or Pot Choice:** A wide Dutch oven, like a Le Creuset, works well for this stew because it provides ample surface area to make the roux and cook the dumplings. If you don't have a wide Dutch oven, a large, deep pan with a tight cover will also work. You need a lid for the dumplings to cook.