



CLASSIC BEEF STEW

2 to 2 1/2 pounds Kinderhook Farm beef chuck or round, trimmed of surface fat and cut into 1 to 1 1/2 inch cubes
2 tablespoons canola or other neutral oil, or olive oil
1 clove garlic, lightly crushed, plus 1 tablespoon minced garlic
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 large or 3 medium onions, cut into eighths
3 tablespoons flour
3 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock, or water, or wine, or a combination
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
4 medium to large potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks
4 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks
1 cup fresh or frozen (thawed) peas
minced fresh parsley leaves for garnish

Heat a large casserole or deep skillet that can later be covered over medium-high heat for 2 to 3 minutes; add the oil and the crushed garlic clove; cook, stirring, for 1 minute, then remove and discard the garlic. Add the meat chunks to the skillet a few at a time, turning to brown well on all sides. Do not crowd or they will not brown properly; cook them in batches if necessary. Season the meat with salt and pepper as it cooks.

When the meat is brown, remove it with a slotted spoon. Turn the heat to medium, add the onions and cook, stirring, until they soften, about 10 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes. Add the stock or water or wine, bay leaf, thyme, and meat, and bring to a boil. Turn the heat to low and cover, Cook, undisturbed, for 30 minutes.

Uncover the pan; the mixture should be quite soupy (if it is not, add a little more liquid). Add the potatoes and carrots, turn the heat up for a minute or so to resume boiling, then lower the heat and cover again. Cook 30 to 60 minutes until the meat and vegetables are tender. Taste for seasoning and add more salt, pepper, and/or thyme if necessary.

Add the minced garlic and the peas; if you are pleased with the stew's consistency, continue to cook, covered, over low heat. If it is too soupy, remove the cover and raise the heat to high. In either case, cook an additional 5 minutes or so, until the peas have heated through and the garlic flavor as pervaded the stew. Garnish and serve. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

from *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman