

Flemish Stew Recipe

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The following recipe is a basic one, and like many other stews it is best made a day ahead since the flavour will improve. The success of the dish depends greatly on the quality of the beer you use. Look for a rich, dark Abbey beer such as Chimay.

Serve this stew with French fries, boiled / mashed potatoes, rice, or noodles

4 pounds stewing beef, (extra weight if you use bones as well) cut into 2-inch cubes

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

4 large onions (about 2 pounds), sliced rustically

500 ml dark Belgian beer

2 or 3 sprigs fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme

2 bay leaves

Season the beef cubes with the salt and pepper

Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a large heavy dutch oven over high heat until hot but not smoking.

Add the beef cubes and sauté until nicely browned on all sides. Work in batches so you don't cool the pot, they need to brown. Remove from pan as they finish and reserve for later.

Add the remaining 1 tablespoon butter to the skillet and melt over low heat. Add the onions and cook slowly stirring occasionally, until browned a deep mahogany colour.

The trick is to cook the onions at just a high enough temperature to caramelize without burning them.

Combine the meat with the caramelised onions in the Dutch oven.

Pour the beer over the meat, add the thyme and bay leaves and bring to a simmer.

At this point you can add Carrots, or Turnips if you like them.

Simmer, covered, over low heat until the meat is very tender, 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

Before serving, if you are looking for something really authentic: add 1/2 tablespoons red currant jelly and 1 tablespoon cider or red wine vinegar.