

Thick and Rich Beer Beef Stew

1 kilo (a little more than 2 pounds) stewing meat cut into chunks (chuck, flanken, shin, any meat meant for stew is good)

1/4 cup or so oil

1 1/2 large onions or two medium, peeled and chopped

1 crushed or finely chopped clove of garlic

4 carrots peeled and sliced thick

20 small to medium mushrooms cleaned and left whole

1 small chunk peeled cubed pumpkin about 1 cup's worth

1 cup chopped celery

5 medium potatoes peeled and sliced thick

2 cups chicken stock or beef broth or if need be, 2 heaping tablespoons soup powder with 2 cups hot water

1 bottle sweet malt beer (black beer in Israel) 330 ml (about 1 1/3 cups)

2 bottles regular beer 330 ml (about 2 2/3 cups)

Pinch of thyme

2 bay leaves

2 tablespoons tomato paste

2 teaspoons salt, or to taste

1/4 cup **cold** water

1/4 cup flour

Directions:

Put 2 tablespoons of oil in the pan and in batches, brown the meat chunks on both sides 2-3 minutes on each side. Do not crowd the pan or the meat won't brown properly and will steam. Depending on the size of your pot, you may need to do 2 to 3 batches, add oil as needed.

Remove the seared beef from pan to a dish as you go, no need to keep hot. Take the onions and fry in the same pot you used for the meat in the oil and juices in the pan, adding a bit more oil if needed and scrape up the brown bits. Sauté till light brown and toss in the crushed garlic sautéing very very briefly. Pull pot off flame and put celery and mushrooms, carrots and pumpkin in sautéing briefly and add the beers and chicken broth, stir and scrape the bottom of pan and add the beef and then the potatoes. The stew should just be covered with liquid if the potatoes stick out a bit it's fine, just make sure the meat is fully covered with liquid (that's why it comes before the potatoes). Add tomato paste, the thyme, bay leaves and salt, stir to combine.

Bring to the boil and immediately lower to lowish simmer, and cook for about 1 hour. Check to see if beef is tender (I pierce it with long wooden skewer) - if beef is not tender enough, cook another 15 minutes and check again. If still not, another 10-15 minutes, and whisk flour into water until smooth and not lumpy and add in a stream to pot. Stir well and let simmer another fifteen minutes till thickened but still quite saucy and beef is super soft and tender. Serve with bread to mop the sauce.