

Treasure Barrel

French-Style Beef Stew: Tender & Hearty Recipe

25 min Prep time	**2 h 30 min** Cook time	**2 h 55 min** Total time
6 Servings	**Medium** Difficulty	**French** Cuisine

Ingredients

For the Stew

- [ ] 3 lbs beef chuck, cut into 1.5 to 2-inch cubes
- [ ] 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- [ ] 1 tsp salt
- [ ] 1/2 tsp black pepper
- [ ] 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- [ ] 2 medium yellow onions, chopped
- [ ] 4 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- [ ] 3 celery stalks, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- [ ] 4 cloves garlic, minced
- [ ] 6 cups good-quality low-sodium beef broth
- [ ] 1 tbsp tomato paste
- [ ] 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- [ ] 2 bay leaves
- [ ] 1 tsp dried thyme
- [ ] 1 lb cremini mushrooms, halved or quartered (optional)
- [ ] 2 tbsp unsalted butter (for mushrooms)

For Garnish (Optional)

- [ ] Fresh parsley, chopped

Instructions

1. First, let's get our beef ready. Pat the beef cubes completely dry with paper towels – this is so important for getting a good sear. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and pepper. Add the beef cubes and toss them gently until they're all lightly coated. This little flour coating helps create a beautiful crust and will start the thickening process for our gravy. Set the coated beef aside for a moment while you heat up your pot. I find this little moment of prep so calming; it's the quiet start to something wonderful.

2. Now for the browning. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. The oil should shimmer slightly when it's ready. Carefully place about half of the beef cubes in the pot in a single layer, making sure not to overcrowd them. Let them sear, undisturbed, for about 3-4 minutes per side, until a deep brown crust forms. Wow, that sizzle and smell is just incredible. Transfer the browned beef to a separate plate and repeat with the remaining beef, adding the last tablespoon of oil if needed. Those browned bits left in the pot are pure gold.

3. Reduce the heat to medium and add your chopped onions, carrots, and celery to the same pot. There should be enough rendered fat from the beef, but add a little more oil if it looks dry. Sauté the vegetables, stirring occasionally, for about 8-10 minutes, until they've softened and the onions are translucent. As they cook, use your spoon to scrape up all those delicious browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Stir in the minced garlic and cook for just another minute until you can smell its lovely fragrance. Then, stir in the tomato paste and let it cook for a minute to deepen its flavor.

4 It's time to bring it all together. Slowly pour in the beef broth, whisking as you go to ensure everything is smooth. Stir in the balsamic vinegar, bay leaves, and dried thyme. Return the seared beef and any accumulated juices back to the pot. Give it all a gentle stir. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer, then reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let it cook for at least 2 hours, or until the beef is tender. The low, slow heat is what does all the work. If you are baking something else, like a foolproof banana bread, the whole house will smell heavenly.

5 If you're adding mushrooms, melt the butter in a separate skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and cook until they are nicely browned and their liquid has evaporated, about 5-7 minutes. During the last 30 minutes of the stew's cooking time, you can remove the lid to allow the gravy to thicken a bit more. Stir in the cooked mushrooms (if using) during these last few minutes. Once the beef is fall-apart tender, remove the bay leaves. Taste the stew and adjust the seasoning with more salt and pepper if you think it needs it. Ladle into warm bowls and garnish with fresh parsley. It is a meal that deserves to be savored.

Nutrition per serving

580 kcal	45 g	20 g	35 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- The key to tender beef is a long, slow simmer. Don't rush this process. If after 2 hours your beef isn't as tender as you'd like, just give it another 30 minutes. Different cuts and sizes of beef can vary in cooking time, so just trust your instincts and let it go until it's perfect.
- If you find your gravy is too thin at the end, you can create a slurry by mixing 1 tablespoon of cornstarch with 2 tablespoons of cold water. Whisk this into the simmering stew and let it cook for a couple of minutes until it has thickened to your liking. Conversely, if it's too thick, just stir in a splash more beef broth.
- This stew is a fantastic make-ahead meal. The flavors actually get deeper and more complex overnight. So, if you have the time, making it a day ahead is a wonderful idea for an easy, super flavorful dinner the next day. Sometimes I make a double batch just for this reason.