

Braised Beef and Guinness Casserole



Guinness – or stout by any other name – adds a lushness to this dish and the prunes offset any bitterness of the stout with just a hint of sweetness. The oil and butter combination helps to brown the meat and develop crusty caramelised bits that really enhance the flavour when incorporated into the sauce. I love this served with buttery mashed potatoes to soak up the juice.

Ingredients

- ♦ 1 kg/2 lb Diced Round Steak
- ♦ 4 tablespoons plain flour seasoned with salt and pepper
- ♦ 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ♦ 4 streaky bacon rashers, chopped
- ♦ 2 large onions, peeled and chopped
- ♦ 15 g/ ½ oz butter
- ♦ 2 cups Guinness (or any stout but not lager!)
- ♦ 2 bay leaves, a sprig of thyme and a sprig of parsley tied together into a bouquet garni
- ♦ 8 prunes
- ♦ ½ cup parsley, finely chopped

Serves 6

To Cook

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.

The easiest way to coat the meat in the flour is to toss it in a plastic bag and shake until the cubes of meat are well coated.

Heat the oil in a sturdy pan and gently brown the bacon. Remove from the pan and place in a casserole dish. Add the onions and fry until they are aromatic and beginning to brown, moving them around to avoid burning. Add these to the bacon in the casserole. Melt the butter in the pan, add the beef and cook until browned all over. Then add to the bacon and onions in the casserole. Keep the pan over the heat and pour in half the Guinness, scraping up any residue, and bring to the boil. Pour this over the meat and add the bouquet garni. Add the rest of the Guinness to the casserole with enough water to ensure that the meat is just covered. Cover the casserole with a tight-fitting lid and place in a moderate oven (180°C/350°F/gas mark 4) for 2 hours.

After 2 hours take the casserole out of the oven and stir. Add the prunes and cook for a further 30 minutes. Check for seasoning and remove the bouquet garni before serving. Stir in the parsley and serve.