

- Prep Time: 20 Minutes
 - Cook Time: 1 Hour 45 Minutes
 - Total Time: 2 Hours 5 Minutes
 - Servings: 6-8 Bowls
 - Intensity Level: Low to Medium (Requires basic knife skills and simmering)
 - Category: Main Course, Soup
 - Cuisine: American/European Classic
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Ingredients

The Base:

- 2 lbs (900g) Beef Stew Meat: Choose chuck roast or bottom round. Cut into bite-sized (1-inch) cubes. Trim excess fat but leave some for flavor.
- 2 tbsp Olive Oil: For searing.
- 1 Large Yellow Onion: Diced (approx. 1.5 cups).
- 3 Cloves Garlic: Minced.
- 2 tbsp Tomato Paste: This is the secret to a rich, deep broth.

The Vegetables:

- 3 Medium Carrots: Peeled and sliced into rounds.
- 3 Stalks Celery: Sliced.
- 8 oz (225g) Cremini Mushrooms: Sliced (optional but recommended for earthiness).
- 1 lb (450g) Yukon Gold Potatoes: Cut into 1/2-inch cubes (optional, for extra heartiness).

The Grains & Liquids:

- 3/4 cup Pearl Barley: Rinsed. *Note: Do not use instant barley.*
- 8 cups Beef Broth: Low sodium preferred.
- 2 cups Water: (Plus more as needed).
- 1 can (14.5 oz) Diced Tomatoes: With juices.

The Seasonings:

- 2 Dried Bay Leaves
- 1 tsp Dried Thyme
- 1 tsp Dried Rosemary: Crushed between your fingers.
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- Salt and Black Pepper: To taste.
- Fresh Parsley: Chopped, for garnish.

Instructions

Phase 1: The Sear (Time: 15 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

1. Prep the Beef: Pat the beef cubes dry with a paper towel. This is crucial for getting a good sear. Season generously with salt and pepper.
2. Heat the Pot: In a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed stock pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat until it shimmers.
3. Brown the Meat: Working in batches (do not overcrowd the pan), add the beef. Sear each side until deeply browned, about 3-4 minutes per batch. Remove the beef and set it aside on a plate. *Do not skip this step; this brown crust (fond) is where the flavor lives.*

Phase 2: The Aromatics (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Sauté the Vegetables: Reduce heat to medium. Add the diced onion to the pot with the beef drippings. Sauté for 5 minutes until translucent.
2. Add Garlic and Paste: Stir in the minced garlic and tomato paste. Cook for 1 minute until fragrant. The tomato paste will darken slightly.
3. Deglaze: Pour in about 1/2 cup of the beef broth. Using a wooden spoon, scrape the bottom of the pot to lift up all the browned bits (fond) left by the beef. This is instant

flavor.

Phase 3: The Simmer (Time: 60 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Combine: Return the seared beef to the pot. Add the carrots, celery, mushrooms (if using), diced tomatoes, Worcestershire sauce, bay leaves, thyme, and rosemary.
2. Add Liquid: Pour in the remaining beef broth and the water. Stir to combine.
3. Simmer: Bring the mixture to a boil, then immediately reduce the heat to low. Cover and let it simmer gently for 60 minutes. The beef should be starting to get tender, but not fully cooked.

Phase 4: The Barley & Potatoes (Time: 40 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Add Barley: After the first hour of simmering, add the rinsed pearl barley and the cubed potatoes (if using).
2. Continue Cooking: Stir well. Cover and continue to simmer for another 35-45 minutes.
3. Check Consistency: Barley absorbs a lot of liquid. If the soup looks too thick, add an extra 1/2 cup of water or broth.
4. Tenderness Check: The soup is done when the barley is plump and chewy, the potatoes

are fork-tender, and the beef falls apart easily when pressed with a spoon.

Phase 5: Final Touches (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Season: Remove the bay leaves. Taste the soup. Add salt and pepper as needed. (Beef broth can be salty, so wait until the end to salt).
 2. Rest: Turn off the heat and let the soup sit for 5-10 minutes. This allows the starches to settle and the flavors to marry.
 3. Serve: Ladle into bowls and garnish with fresh chopped parsley.
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Chef's Notes for the Perfect Bowl

- The Barley Dilemma: Pearl barley takes about 45-50 minutes to cook. If you use quick-cooking barley, add it only in the last 15 minutes. If you want a clearer broth, cook the barley separately in water and add it to the soup at the end.
- Wine Pairing: This soup pairs beautifully with a medium-bodied red wine, such as a Merlot or a Côtes du Rhône. The tannins cut through the richness of the beef.
- Storage: This soup thickens significantly when stored in the fridge. When reheating, you will almost certainly need to add a splash of water or broth to loosen it up. It stores well for 4 days in the fridge and freezes well for up to 3 months (though potatoes can get

grainy upon freezing).

Nutrition Information

Disclaimer: The nutritional information below is an estimate based on standard ingredient measurements. It is calculated for a serving size of 1/8th of the recipe (approximately 1.5 cups).

- Calories: 380 kcal
- Total Fat: 12g
- Saturated Fat: 3.5g
- Cholesterol: 65mg
- Sodium: 680mg (depends heavily on broth used)
- Total Carbohydrates: 38g
- Dietary Fiber: 7g
- Sugars: 6g

- Protein: 30g
- Vitamin A: 80% DV
- Vitamin C: 15% DV
- Calcium: 6% DV
- Iron: 25% DV