

Dad's Stews

Equipment. A 6-8 quart **pot** with a cover, tall. I prefer all-metal pots with a glass cover, but anything will do. A large **frying pan**, to brown meats; if you don't have one, use the pot beforehand instead.

Be careful, when browning meats, to add the meat right after the oil. Don't let the oil sit around getting hot by itself, it can splatter when you add the meat and can even catch on fire if it heats too long.

Like soups, I think stews taste best the next day. You can keep them in the fridge for 3-4 days before the flavor fades.

Chili

Takes about an hour.

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

2-3 large onions (white or yellow), chopped

1 large red onion, chopped (for crunchiness at the end)

Spices

1 tablespoon oregano (or herbs de provence)

1 tablespoon paprika

1 tablespoon salt

4 tablespoons chili powder

1 teaspoon garlic (minced, crushed, whatever)

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (very hot, be careful)

Beans (including liquids)

1 can (16 ounces) dark red kidney beans

1 can cannellini (white kidney beans)

2 cans pinto beans (or chili beans, or more kidney beans)

1 can (14 ounces) diced tomatoes

2 tablespoons tomato paste (this is the thickener)

Meat is optional

1 pound hamburger meat, separated and browned in frying pan for 5 minutes at medium-high heat, stirring often

Heat the olive oil at medium heat in a large pot, add the chopped yellow onion and cook for **5 minutes**, stirring once in a while. If the onions start to brown, add a bit more oil.

Add the spices. Stir well for **1 minute**. Then add the beans, tomato stuff and meat. Cover and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer (just slightly bubbling) for **45 minutes**. Stir now and again.

Turn off the heat. Add the chopped red onion. Let sit for **15 minutes**. Add salt and pepper if needed.

Beef Stew

Takes about 2 hours.

2-3 tablespoons olive oil
2-3 large onions (white or yellow), chopped

Spices

1 tablespoon curry powder
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon garlic (minced, crushed, whatever)
1 teaspoon lemongrass paste (if you can find it)

2 cans (16 ounces each) beef broth
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 can (14 ounces) diced tomatoes (with liquid)

Meat

2 pounds stew meat, cut into 1.5 inch chunks. Use stew meat or chuck, not good steak. Brown in a large frying pan with 1 tablespoon olive oil at high heat for **5 minutes**, stirring often. Do in two batches if needed.

2 carrots, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
2 potatoes, cut into 1 inch pieces
2/3 cup frozen peas (or fresh)
optional: 8 ounces mushrooms, chopped

Heat the olive oil at medium heat in a large pot, add the chopped yellow onion and cook for **5 minutes**, stirring once in a while. If the onions start to brown, add a bit more oil.

Add the spices and tomato stuff, the browned meat, and the beef broth. Cover and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer (just slightly bubbling) for **60 minutes**, stirring now and again.

Add carrots and potatoes (and mushrooms), simmer uncovered for **30 minutes**.

Add the peas. Turn off the heat. Let sit **10 minutes**. Season with salt and pepper. Options: Sprinkle with parsley when serving, or add a small slice of butter.

Chicken, Sausage and Shrimp Stew

Takes about an hour and a half.

2-3 tablespoons olive oil
2 large onions (white or yellow), chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped

Spices

1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon oregano
1 tablespoon thyme
1 teaspoon garlic (minced, crushed, whatever)

1 can (14 ounces) diced tomatoes (with liquid)
2 cans (16 ounces each) chicken broth
1 cup white wine

4-6 pimento-stuffed green olives, each sliced into 4-5 rounds

Meat

6 large chicken thighs (with or without bones), remove the skin. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and brown in a frying pan in 1 tablespoon of olive oil at high heat for **5 minutes**, turning several times. Do in batches if needed. Put aside.

1 pound kielbasi or other sausage, cut into 1/4 inch rounds. Brown in a frying pan in 1 tablespoon of olive oil at high heat for **4 minutes**, turning often. Put aside.

1 pound large shrimp, uncooked, peeled and deveined. You can usually buy them frozen but unpeeled. Peeling takes some practice. I sometimes make the stew without shrimp.

Heat the olive oil at medium heat in a large pot, add the chopped onion and red pepper and cook for **5 minutes**, stirring once in a while. If the onions start to brown, add a bit more oil.

Add the spices and garlic, stir 2 minutes. Add the diced tomatoes, chicken broth, wine, browned chicken thighs and kielbasi. Cover and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer (just slightly bubbling) for **25 minutes**, stirring now and again.

Uncover, add olives, and simmer another **40 minutes**. Add shrimp and cook another **5 minutes**. Turn off the heat. Remove chicken bones. Season with salt and pepper. Thin with one or two cups water if desired. Serve with crusty bread.