

Beef Bourguignon

Like all hearty stews, beef bourguignon has its origins in the Middle Ages when it offered a way to tenderize tough meat and provide sustenance for many. But the recipe didn't reach French restaurants until 1903 when chef Auguste Escoffier published its ingredients and method. Because of Escoffier's reputation as a great chef, boeuf bourguignon became a fine dining sensation in Paris, London, and New York.

It then retreated to mostly French kitchens until American chef Julia Child included the recipe in her *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* bestseller in 1961. Her introduction of beef cubes rather than one chunk of beef made the recipe popular in households throughout the world, and the dish remains a firm international favorite today.

The key to making a good beef bourguignon is to use a really good, rich, red wine. I have had excellent results using a bottle of Louis Jadot from the Beaujolais Village winery.

Ingredients

3 lbs. Lean trimmed boneless chuck steak
1 small onion
4 garlic cloves
9 medium carrots (3 cups)
20 oz fresh Cremini mushrooms
10 oz. pearl onions
1 Tablespoon canned tomato paste
1 bottle rich red wine
1 cup beef broth
2 Tablespoons olive oil
All-purpose white flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 sprigs of fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
Parsley for garnish (optional)

Cooking Utensils

Knife and cutting board
Measuring cup
Measuring Spoons
Vegetable peeler
Can opener
Spatula
Slotted spoon
Wooden spoon
Large plate
Large cookpot
Colander
Large Dutch oven with a tight fitting oven safe lid
Corkscrew
Plate

Preheat the oven to 325°. Cut the meat into stew size pieces. The butcher can do this for you. Chop the onion and garlic. Peel and cut the carrots into 3rds. Trim and cut the mushrooms into quarters. Bring water to boil in the cookpot on the stove.

Add the pearl onions and boil for one minute. Drain the onions in the colander and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking process. Peel and trim the tops of the onions, leaving the roots attached so the onions stay whole. Open the bottle of wine and let it breathe. The dish can be prepared up to this point in advance.

Season the meat with the salt and black pepper. Place the Dutch oven on the stove and heat it up over high heat. Add 1 Tablespoon of oil and place enough meat to make a single layer on the bottom of the pot. Do not crowd the meat. Brown the meat deeply on all sides, turning as needed. This should take around 8-12 minutes. Timing will vary depending on the pot you use and the heat of your stove. Using a slotted spoon remove the meat to a plate and repeat with the remaining meat. During this process there will be a build up of a brown residue on the surface of the pot. This is where the flavor for the stew comes from, so you want this to happen. If it starts to burn, turn down the heat.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the remaining tablespoon of oil, chopped onion, and garlic to the pot. Cook stirring until they have turned translucent, about 6-8 minutes. Add the flour and tomato paste. Stir for 2-3 minutes.

Add the wine to the pot and bring to a boil. Use a wooden spoon to scrape up all the brown bits on the bottom of the pot. Return the meat to the pot. Add the beef broth, sprigs of thyme, bay leaf, and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt. Return to a boil over high heat. Cover the pot with the lid and place it in the hot oven. Cook for 1 hour.

After the stew has cooked for 1 hour, remove it from the oven and add the carrots, pearl onions, and the mushrooms. Stir well, replace the lid, and return it to the oven. Cook for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes partially remove the lid and cook for another 30 minutes. Remove the pot from the oven and stir well. Return the pot to the oven without the lid and cook uncovered for 30 minutes more. When done, the meat and vegetables should be very tender, and the sauce should have thickened. If not, then it needs more cooking.