

Jim's Buffalo Carbonnade

Made with buffalo stew meat and a good, hearty beer, this version of the traditional Belgian dish is quite stripped down—it's delicious, but in no way fancy. I made mine with my husband's homebrew (made with hops from our back yard, naturally), but any high-quality beer with some good body will do.

Note that this isn't a recipe for a crowd—it's just enough for two hearty servings. Double or triple it if you'd like, searing the meat in batches, then serve the stew over buttered noodles or polenta, with steamed or roasted carrots.

Time: 30 minutes active time, plus plenty of simmering

Makes: 2 servings

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 pound buffalo stew meat, cut into 1 1/2" pieces (beef will also work)

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1 large onion, halved and sliced

2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

2 cups good beer

1 cup beef stock

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Heat a medium-sized soup pot with a tight-fitting lid over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil. Coat the stew meat with the flour on all sides, and season with salt and pepper. Add the meat to the hot oil, and cook until the pieces are browned on all sides, turning them only when they release easily from the pan, about 15 minutes total. Transfer the beef to a plate and set aside.

Add the remaining tablespoon of oil to the pan, then add the onions, and season with salt and pepper. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook, stirring often and scraping any brown bits up off the bottom of the pan, until the onions are deep golden brown, about 30 minutes.

Add the garlic and thyme, and cook and stir for about 30 seconds. Add the beer and beef stock, and bring the mixture to a simmer. Slide in the beef, cover the pot, reduce the heat to its lowest setting, and cook at a bare simmer for another 1 1/2 hours, or until the meat is extremely tender. Remove the lid, and simmer another 15 to 20 minutes, or until the liquid is thick and glossy. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper, if necessary. Stir in the butter, and serve hot, over buttered noodles or polenta.