

Baby Beef Stew Classico

I thought I better put one other one serving down-home-style, nothing fancy, lottsa veggies, mom's beef stew here since I use the 1 1/2 quart slow cooker so often and just make this. I cut my own stew meat from a boneless chuck roast and it tastes so great. If you have never cut your own stew meat, I recommend you do it here with a small amount. You will get the reward of tender, juicy, and top-notch flavor. Get a nice chuck roast, lean and fresh cut, and put it on your cutting board and get a long bladed, sharp knife used for boning out of your knife set. Cut it into 3 equal portions; freeze the two portions for another stew day or pot roast for two. Then cut the one pound portion into cubes; it is that easy. Many people just toss the meat in au blanc style, but a good stew needs the quick browning to get the meat caramelized; the flavor will reflect it.

Recommended Size: 1 1/2 to 3 quart cooker

Machine Setting: High

Cook Time: 4 to 5 hours

Serves 2

12-ounces to 1-pound lean boneless chuck roast trimmed of fat and cut in to 1 1/2-inch chunks

Salt and freshly-ground black or white pepper

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 small yellow onion, chopped

1/4 (1-pound bag) baby carrots

1 small parsnip (or 1/2 of a big one), peeled and diced

6-ounces baby red potatoes, halved or quartered

1 1/2 cups beef broth

1/2 cup dry red wine of choice (whatever is next to the stove)

2 tablespoons tomato paste (I use imported brand that comes in the tube)

4 sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil, drained and chopped

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme or marjoram

1 1/2 tablespoons soft unsalted butter

1 1/2 tablespoons flour

1/4 cup frozen petit peas, thawed

Sprinkle the cubes of beef with some salt and pepper. In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, heat the oil until very hot. Add the meat cubes; brown on all sides, 4 to 5 minutes.

Spray the crock with nonstick vegetable cooking spray and add all the vegetables. Add the meat, broth, wine, tomato paste, sundried tomatoes, and herb; mix well. Cover and cook on HIGH for 4 to 5 hours (on LOW for 7 to 8 hours), until the meat is fork-tender. In a small bowl with a fork, knead together the butter and flour; set aside in the refrigerator (if you don't want to use the butter, stir the flour into a few tablespoons more broth). The last half hour, add the butter-flour ball (known as a *buerre manie*) and stir until melted. Add the peas. Recover and cook another 20 minutes, until thickened a bit. Season to taste and serve over noodles or rice, or with nice fresh bread.