

# for a happy st patrick's day ... ... just add guinness!

I couldn't let the March issue of the newsletter go by without some passing reference or acknowledgment of St Patrick's Day. After all, for many people March 17 is the most celebrated day of the month along with that other all-important day in March, the first day of spring!

While shamrocks and green apparel are a must on March 17, there is another quintessentially Irish ingredient that no St Paddy's day celebration should be without: a pint of rich, dark, velvety smooth Guinness! And to double your Guinness pleasure, here's a recipe that incorporates the Emerald Isle's most famous brew.

## Beef and Guinness stew

Recipe and photo: Lise Brown

### Ingredients

Canola oil (or other mild tasting oil with a high smoke point)  
Salt, pepper and flour for dredging  
2½ to 3 lbs beef blade roast, cut into 1 to 1½ in. cubes  
1 large onion thinly sliced - about 2 cups  
1 large clove garlic minced  
12 oz cremini mushrooms quartered - about 4 cups  
2 Tbsp (heaping) tomato paste  
16 oz Guinness  
2 cups beef stock  
1 tbsp brown sugar  
Bouquet garni (tied bundle of fresh rosemary, thyme, bay leaves)  
Salt and pepper  
1 lb carrots cut into 1 in. chunks - about 4 cups  
¼ cup each flour and water

### Preparation

Heat 1 tbsp of oil over medium-high heat in a Dutch oven or other large heavy bottomed pot. Toss beef cubes with salt and pepper then dredge with flour, shaking off excess before searing. Sear meat in hot oil, in batches\*, adding more oil if needed, until all the meat is nicely browned on all sides - you want nice dark colouring; dark equals flavour! As the meat browns, remove to a large bowl and set aside.

*\*Never overcrowd the pot, if you do the beef will not brown, it will steam and turn a greyish colour.*

When all the beef is browned and set aside, turn heat down to medium or medium-low. Add onion to pot and cook, stirring, until beginning to soften then add garlic and mushrooms. Continue to cook, stirring, until onions are translucent, garlic is fragrant and mushrooms have begun to release their liquid. Stir in tomato paste and mix until well incorporated.

Turn heat up to high and add about ¼ of the Guinness to deglaze, scraping to release all those tasty brown bits on the bottom. Return the meat and any accumulated juices to the pot, add the rest of the Guinness and all



the stock, sprinkle in the brown sugar, tuck in the bouquet garni, and add a bit of salt and pepper - not too much, you can adjust seasoning later before serving. Mix well and bring to a boil. Give the stew a good stir, cover with a tight fitting lid and place in an oven preheated to 275°F or whatever temperature will maintain a gentle simmer (every oven is different!)

After ½ an hour, stir in the carrots and continue to simmer, covered, until the carrots and meat are fork tender, 1 to 2 hours more. Remove and discard bouquet garni.

Mix well the ¼ cup each of flour and water to form a smooth slurry. Slowly stir into the simmering stew and simmer 5 minutes more; if you prefer a thinner sauce, use less of the flour slurry. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if needed.

My favourite way to serve this stew is in individual crocks with plenty of crusty bread, but it's also fabulous topped with or ladled over another Irish favourite, Champ!

