



Spezzatino di Manzo - Italian Beef Stew

The perfect comfort food during cooler months. Chuck beef is braised until tender in a hearty stew of carrots, celery, mushrooms, and red wine. Herbs like rosemary and bay leaf add additional flavour to this tasty stew that is perfect served with creamy polenta, risotto, crusty bread or mashed potatoes. There is something about the aroma of the beef braising in wine with rosemary that is just so comforting.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 pounds chuck roast/stewing beef cubed
- Braised short ribs * optional/recommended
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 medium onion diced
- 3 medium carrots diced
- 2 large celery ribs diced
- mushrooms sliced
- potatoes *optional
- 2-3 Tbsp flour (in a plastic bag)
- 1 cup dry red wine : chianti, valpolicella, carbernet, etc
- 2 cups beef stock
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- salt and pepper to taste
- garlic powder (optional)
- Fresh rosemary, thyme and 1-2 bay leaf
- hot chilly flakes * optional

For cornstarch slurry (optional* to thicken up stew at end)**

- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 ounce water

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 320°F and position the middle rack to fit a large Dutch oven. Place a large bowl near the stove to place the seared meat.

Drizzle olive oil into the Dutch oven and heat until hot. Add the short ribs and sear well on both sides. While they sear, add the cubed beef in the plastic bag with the flour and toss lightly coating the beef. Keep in the bag until ready to use.

Remove the short ribs and transfer to the bowl.

Add the floured cubed beef to the pot in batches, being careful not to overcrowd. Sear on all sides. Once browned, remove and add to the bowl with the short ribs.

Reduce heat a little and add more olive oil if needed. Add the carrots, celery, mushrooms, and onion. Cook for 5–7 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Increase heat to medium-high and add the red wine, scraping the bottom of the pot to deglaze. Stir until the pan is smooth and all browned bits of meat are released, about 5–7 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste

Return all the meat to the pot. and season generously with salt and pepper (garlic powder optional). Add the beef stock, rosemary, thyme, and bay leaf, stirring well. The meat should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ submerged in liquid.

Cover tightly and cook in the oven for 2 hours.

After 2 hours, add the potatoes, stir, making sure they are submerged.

Remove the lid and return to the oven for an additional 30 minutes uncovered. This is to thicken the sauce and add colour to the meat.

Choosing the Right Beef for Spezzatino

For an authentic Italian spezzatino (beef stew), choose budget-friendly, tougher cuts of beef rich in connective tissue and fat marbling. When cooked low and slow, these cuts break down beautifully, resulting in meat that is deeply flavourful and melt-in-your-mouth tender.

Beef Chuck (chuck roast): ideal & most common. Well marbled, suited for long braising.

Beef Shoulder: similar to chuck, with excellent texture & flavour for slow-cooking

Brisket: Produces a rich, hearty stew with deep beef flavour

Beef Cheek: Exceptionally tender when braised, thanks to its high collagen content

Stewing Beef: pre-cut mixed cuts, for best results ask specifically for chuck

Notes

- If you want a thicker sauce use a slurry of cornstarch after braising and right before serving. Simply mix 1 tablespoon of cornstarch with 1 ounce of water. Pour the slurry into the pot while it's bubbling and stir for 1 minute until sauce thickens. For an even thicker sauce use more slurry.
- Dried mushrooms can be easily substituted for fresh mushrooms. They work great for stews like this.
- Leftovers can be saved for up to 3 days in the refrigerator and 3 months in the freezer.