

Beef in beer

Ingredients: Serves 6-8 people

900g chuck steak, cut into 5cm squares

350g onions peeled, sliced in quarters then separated into layers

1 fat clove of garlic, crushed

1 tbsp of olive oil

1 sprig fresh thyme or ½ teaspoon of dried thyme

1 bay leaf

1 well heaped tbsp of plain flour

275ml pale ale

Salt & freshly milled black pepper

Method: Pre-heat oven to Gas 1 / 275f / 140c

Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole until sizzling hot then sear the meat in it - just a few pieces at a time until they become a dark mahogany brown all over. As the pieces brown, remove them to a plate then add the onions to the casserole and, with the heat still high toss them around until brown at the edges. Now return the meat to the casserole together with any juices. Add the flour, turn the heat down and using a wooden spoon stir it around to soak up all the juices. It will look rather stodgy and unattractive at this stage but that's quite normal.

Next gradually stir in the pale ale and whilst everything slowly comes up to simmering point, add the thyme, bay leaf, crushed garlic and some salt and pepper.

As soon as it begins to simmer, stir thoroughly, put on a tight-fitting lid and transfer the casserole to the middle shelf of the oven.

Cook at a gentle simmer for 2½ hours. Don't take the lid off and have a taste half-way through because, early on, the beer hasn't had time to develop into a delicious sauce; the beautiful aroma will make you very hungry, but please leave it alone!

This recipe has been Tried & Tested by Ann McPhie and was taken from Delia Smith's Cookery Course Park Two. It has been a favourite of Ann and her family for many years. It's a great winter warmer, wonderful with Delia's cheesy baked croutons on top too. Thanks Delia.

