

Italian Stew

Notes: I prefer tenderized stew meat because it speeds up the cooking process quite a bit. If you can't find tenderized meat, ask the butcher/meat counter to tenderize it for you. Or you can beat it with the pointy edge of a mallet (but this doesn't work as well). If you don't have or don't like red wine, just use more beef broth.



1 tablespoon butter
1 small yellow onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound tenderized stew meat, cut into smaller bite-size pieces
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 cup flour
salt and pepper
1/4 teaspoon paprika
2 1/2 cups beef broth
1/4 cup red wine
8 ounces mushrooms, stems removed and quartered
1 1/4 cups carrots, cut into bite-size chunks
1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
2 bay leaves
1 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
1 teaspoon dried basil
salt and pepper to taste

1 pound rigatoni cooked al dente
Parmesan cheese

In a large pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the diced onion and cook until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Remove to a bowl.

Combine the flour, salt, pepper, and paprika in a zip-top bag. Add in the chunks of stew meat and shake until the flour mixture is covering the meat.

Over medium high heat in the same pot, add the one tablespoon of olive oil. When the oil is almost smoking, dump in the bag of meat and flour. Let brown on all sides. When the meat is browned, pour in the red wine and scrape up the brown bits on the bottom of the pan. (At this point, you could move this to a Crock Pot and add everything else in the Crock Pot and cook on low for 6-8 hours.) Add the beef broth into the pot and reduce the heat to medium. Stir in the mushrooms, carrots, tomatoes, bay leaves, parsley, and basil. Bring to a simmer and reduce the heat to medium-low. Place the lid on, but leave it open a crack, and let it simmer for about 2 hours, stirring every so often. The stew is done when the carrots and beef are tender. Discard the bay leaves, season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve over rigatoni. Garnish with Parmesan cheese.

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