

Irish Stew

Ingredients

1Kg (2lbs) lamb (or traditionally mutton) neck chops or stewing lamb (mutton)

2 large onions

1Kg (2lbs) potatoes

3 medium carrots

Large bunch fresh parsley

2 tsp chopped fresh thyme

Approx 400ml (14fl oz) water or stock

Salt and pepper



Method

Remember: "floury" potatoes will dissolve into the gravy, "waxy" ones will not. We like to use a mixture.

Serve hot with more fresh chopped parsley sprinkled on top and swirl in a little butter just before you bring to table.

This dish can be made in advance and reheated thoroughly before serving.

Peel the onions and slice them into rounds. Peel the potatoes as thinly as possible. Leave small potatoes whole and cut large potatoes in half so all are roughly of even size. Cut the meat into good-sized pieces. Small chops can be left whole. Leave any bone attached. Peel and thickly slice the carrots.

Place a layer of onions on the bottom of a heavy casserole, then some carrots and then the meat on top. Sprinkle chopped thyme and parsley generously, season well. Layer with the rest of the onions and carrots with the potatoes. Sprinkle thyme and parsley again on top.

Add the water or stock according to your preference of a "dry" stew or a "wet" stew. A good stew should have some gravy but not be "too wet". It's best to add more stock later than too much at the start.

Bring the stew to a boil, cover as tightly as possible. Either reduce the heat to a simmer and cook on top of the stove or place in a preheated oven at 160°C (Gas Mark 3, 325°F) for 2½-3 hours until the meat is tender. Keep an eye on it towards the end, and adjust the gravy by adding a little water if you think it too dry.

Serves 4