

Beef Stifado

This recipe took a bit of hunting down. There are a few recipes on the 'net for it, but they all differ quite a bit - some have red wine, some have white, I even found one with no wine in it! Greek restaurants keep their Stifado recipe a closely guarded secret and Greek cookery books are thin on the ground. So this is a combination of the best of all the recipes I found and works great!

Preparation time: 30 mins / Cooking time: at least 3 hours

Ingredients

The following recipe will feed 6 hungry guests!

- 1.5 Kgs Stewing or chuck steak
- 100g plain flour
- At least 1/2 bottle of good, rich red wine
- 2 Tbsp (30ml) red wine vinegar
- 3 Cloves of garlic, thinly sliced
- 800g baby onions or shallots
- Olive oil for frying
- 1 cinnamon stick, broken in half
- 3 Bay leaves
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- 2 Tbsp tomato puree
- 200ml beef stock (made with oxo / stock cube)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 160 deg C / Gas mark 3

Cut your beef into large chunks, the bigger the better, but around 2" is about right. Season the flour with plenty of black pepper and a bit of salt, and coat the chunks of beef. In a fairly hot pan, heat the olive oil and when hot, fry your chunks of beef until sealed on all sides and slightly browned. These can be done in batches of a few at a time if required. Put into a large casserole or a pot with a lid when done.

Add some more oil to the pan and fry the onions (chopped in half if they're too big) over a medium heat until they start to brown - about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and fry for a further minute. Put this into the casserole with the beef. Pour the wine into the pan, add the red wine vinegar, cinnamon, ground allspice and heat until it just begins to boil. Add this to the casserole along with the beef stock and the bayleaves. Stir in the tomato puree.

Put the lid onto your brimming casserole and whack it into the oven. Grab yourself the other half bottle of wine and marinate your throat and stomach in it. Occasionally disturb yourself to give the stifado a stir. It will take at least 3 hours to cook, but 4 will be better and 5 won't hurt it! When it's done, the meat should be very tender and the sauce nice and thick.

Traditionally, this dish is served with crust bread to mop up the gravy, but it's also great with a few veg and my great [rosemary potatoes](#).

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