

Oxtail Stew

I love to come into a mother's kitchen and prepare buttery and succulent oxtail stew as baby naps nearby. It is a slow-cooking dish that takes time and patience—but not much skill or effort. A hearty serving of this stew will give you a boost of iron and protein, supporting lactation. It's delicious over mashed potatoes or polenta (cooked according to package directions), or with rice and goat cheese.

Serves 6–8

3 tablespoons (45 ml) olive oil, plus more if needed
1 cup (110 g) roughly chopped white or yellow onion
6 loosely packed cups (450 g) sliced or quartered mushrooms
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
4 pounds (1.8 kg) bone-in oxtails, any and all sizes
2 quarts (2 L) homemade (see page 129) or store-bought broth
2 tablespoons soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos
4 small to medium ripe tomatoes, quartered, with seeds left in
2 large carrots, unpeeled, cut into thick slices
1 clove garlic, minced
4 pinches of fresh thyme or 2 pinches of dried thyme (optional)
For the roux (optional):
6 tablespoons (85 g) salted grass-fed butter, at room temperature
6 tablespoons (45 g) all-purpose flour

In a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Brown the onions and mushrooms until they turn a golden brown. Turn off the heat and transfer the mushrooms and onions to a small bowl and set aside. Season the oxtail bones with sea salt and pepper and place into the pot until the edges brown slightly, about 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes, carrots, garlic, and thyme, if using, along with the sauteed mushrooms and onions.

Let simmer for another 2 hours over low heat, covered. If the meat has not fallen off the bones yet but the liquid has decreased, add more broth or water and continue cooking until it does. Turn off the heat, then season the stew with salt and pepper to taste.

If you would like a thicker stew, make a butter and flour roux: In a small pot, heat the butter over medium-high heat. Whisk in the flour and mix until it starts to bubble. Reduce heat to low and turn the whisking into a gentle stir. Fold the roux into the oxtail stew.

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Seaweed Soup

In Korea, it's traditional to feed a mother miyeokguk, or seaweed soup, up to three times a day after she gives birth, because seaweed helps to promote lactation, support the hormones, and calm the nervous system.

Serves 6–8

1/2 of a white or yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 tablespoons sesame oil
4 ounces (115 g) beef sirloin, cubed (omit for a vegetarian version), or add 1 cup dried anchovie
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 quarts (2 L) water or broth of your choice
2 cups (30 g) dried seaweed (dulse, wakame, hijiki, arame, or kelp), rinsed to remove any residual bits of rocks or shells
6 shiitake mushrooms, dried or fresh
1 tablespoon soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos, or to taste

For a heartier stew, add one or all of the following:

1 pound (455 g) organic beef or pork stew meat
1/2 cup (about 120 g) leftover cooked grains (such as millet or rice)
2 large pasture-raised eggs

In a medium pot over medium heat, sauté the onions in the oil until lightly browned. Add the beef sirloin, garlic, and salt. Stir and cook the meat until it turns a light brown.

Add the water or broth, seaweed, and mushrooms, along with the stew meat and/ or leftover rice, if you want a heartier stew. Reduce the heat to low and let everything simmer, covered, for 40 minutes. If you're adding the eggs, beat them in a small bowl and, about 5 minutes before the soup is done, pour them into the soup, swirling them with a fork or whisking in a clockwise direction as they cook.

Eat warm. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days, or freeze in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars (see page 130) for up to 3 months.

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Oats, Ginger, & Cinnamon Tea

Reminiscent of Mexican horchata, this beverage is circulation-boosting, warming, and rich with the lactation-supporting benefits of oats.

Serves 4

1 cup (90 g) rolled oats

1/2 cup (40 g) steel-cut oats

1 1/2-inch (4-cm) knob of fresh ginger, peeled and halved

3 cinnamon sticks or 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon, plus more ground cinnamon for sprinkling

Pinch of sea salt

1 to 2 tablespoons honey, or to taste

Bring 7 cups (1.7 L) water to a boil in a medium pot. Add the oats, ginger, cinnamon sticks, and salt to the boiling water. Reduce heat to low and let it simmer, three-quarters covered, for 30 minutes. Check to make sure the water level remains the same, adding more water if needed. Keep an eye on the pot, as it is very easy for this tea to boil over.

When the water has turned a milky white color and the mixture has a smooth consistency, strain it, saving the oats for another use (congee or cookies come to mind!). Pour the tea into a glass jar or directly into your mug, then stir in the honey. Sprinkle the top with a touch of ground cinnamon and drink warm.

Store in the fridge for up to 3 days. Reheat by adding a little boiling water, stir, and enjoy!

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