

STEW-PENDOUS!

By Laura Kurella

Fall brings us many things: Chillier air, brighter-colored leaves, and what I like to think is a primitive instinct – the desire to eat more hearty foods!

Perhaps we are a little like the black bears, who look to eat as much as they can in the fall, so that the additional weight will help get them through the leaner months of winter.

Perhaps our craving of warm and savory foods is just our bellies aligning with Mother Nature, who puts forth such a bounty of root vegetables, and that taste oh-so-much better when they are stewed!

Though we may never know the deep connection there seems to be between fall and stews, we do know that it’s been going on for a long, long time!

According to written records, recipes for stews date back to 1st century BC, and surprisingly, the cookbook that recorded these old recipes for it still survives. In fact, an English translation of ‘Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome, A Bibliography, Critical Review and Translation of the Ancient Book known as Apicius de re Coquinaria’ by Joseph Dommers Vehling, is available in reprint paperback (Dover Publications).

There is also ample evidence from primitive tribes, and archaeological evidence, that boiling foods together (stews) go back 7,000 or 8,000 years or more, and some theorize that stewing was even practiced by primitive man, perhaps as long ago as 1/2 to 1 million years ago. Primitive instinct, indeed!

Healthy, hearty, and loaded with in season ingredients, fall is truly the perfect time to put together a pot of stew!

In addition to being hearty, a stew will also make your house smell good, and give your children the same memories you have from your childhood.

Yes, I know that today most parents do not have the luxury of being able to stay home, and cook for their family all day. However, that does not mean you cannot



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make your family some stew, especially if you enlist the help of a crock pot.

Loading one up in the morning – or whenever you leave for work - will not only give your family a house filled with amazing aroma when they come home, but it will also do that for you, too!

Here now are two simple yet super-flavorful ways to indulge in a hardy, healthy dish that can cook while you are at work – “Stew-pendous!” ENJOY!

Savory Slow-cooked Beef Stew

2 pounds beef stew or flat Iron meat

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 large onion, diced

1 bag of whole carrots, peeled and chunked

2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

4 medium -large red skinned potatoes, washed and cubed

2 bay leaves

1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon black pepper

1 tablespoon celery flakes

1 tablespoon thyme

1 teaspoon sweet paprika

Cut meat into bite-size pieces, then place in a bag with flour. Shake to evenly coat. In a large skillet over high heat, heat oil. Add onions and cook, stirring, until they begin to caramelize, about 7 minutes. Transfer onions to crock pot, draining oil back into skillet. Add floured meat to hot skillet and sear on all sides. Once browned, add to slow cooker, draining oil back into pan. Add carrots to skillet and cook, stirring for about 3 minutes. Pour broth into skil-



A dish that can offer delicious, comforting aromas, amazing flavors, better health, and cooked in a crock pot while you are at work? That’s what I call, “Stew-pendous!” Photo by Laura Kurella.

let and, using spatula, scrape bottom and sides of skillet to deglaze - loosen browned bits- from pan. Pour all into crock pot then to crock pot add potatoes, bay leaves, Worcestershire, and spices. Stir to mix then cover. Set crock pot to “low,” if you want it to cook for 8 hours, or set it to “high” if you want it to cook for 4 hours. Remove bay leaves before serving, or leave them in and play the game that whoever ends up with the bay leaf in their bowl doesn’t have to help clean up!

Creamy-dreamy Slow-cooked Chicken Stew

Prep time: 15 minutes;

Cook time: 4 to 8 hours;

Total time: 4 to 8 hours and

15 minutes; Yield: 4 servings.

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium onion, diced

2 boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite sized pieces

4 whole carrots

1/2 cup white wine or vegetable broth

4 red potatoes, sliced

1 tablespoon celery flakes

10.5 ounces cream of

chicken soup

1/2 cup milk, cream, or substitute

1/2 cup sour cream, or substitute

1 teaspoon black pepper

1 ounce dry ranch dressing mix

1 teaspoon parsley flakes

1/2 teaspoon natural mineral sea salt, or to taste

In a large skillet over high heat, heat oil then add onion. Cook, stirring, until onions begin to caramelize, about 7 minutes. Add chicken chunks, stirring, allowing to sear on a few sides and

caramelize.

(This is a flavor step so don’t skip.) Add carrots, stirring, until you see carrots begin to sear. Deglaze pan with white wine or vegetable broth, scraping bottom and sides into crock pot so that all brown bits are removed from skillet and added to pot. Add remaining ingredients to crock pot. Stir, cover, and set crock pot on “low” for 6-8 hours of cooking, or “high” for 3-4 hours of cooking. (FYI: Low and slow is the best with milk and dairy products.)