



Vegetarian 'Irish Stew'

While most Irish would think I've missed the point by omitting the lamb from an Irish stew, I've discovered that the combination of slowly braised potato and onion is quite delicious as a vegetarian dish, especially with the addition of some extra root vegetables and barley. If you don't have a flameproof lidded casserole dish, use an ovenproof dish covered tightly with a lid or doubled aluminium foil and cook in a pre-heated 150°C oven for about 1½ hours, until everything is tender. Creamed spinach (see video) is a great accompaniment, I like to mix it into the stew on my plate before eating it all together.

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- 400g potatoes, peeled
- 2 brown onions, peeled and halved
- 1 carrot, peeled
- 1 parsnip, peeled
- ½ swede, peeled
- ¼ cup pearl barley (about 50g)
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 teaspoons thyme leaves
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Creamed Spinach, for serving



METHOD

1. Cut potato, onion, carrot, parsnip and swede into about 1cm thick slices.
2. Arrange half the potato on the bottom of a flame-proof lidded casserole dish. Sprinkle well with salt, and pepper.
3. Spread half the onion over it then more salt and pepper.
4. Toss carrot, parsnip, swede and pearl barley with salt, pepper and the thyme.
5. Arrange this mixture on top of the onion.
6. Top with remaining onion, another generous sprinkle of salt and pepper, then with remaining potato and a little more salt and pepper.
7. Pour in vegetable stock and, if necessary, add enough cold water to just cover it all, pressing down gently to submerge everything.
8. Place over a high heat and bring to the boil.
9. Cover, reduce to the lowest possible heat and simmer for 1 hour.
10. Uncover, increase heat to medium and simmer for a further 30 minutes, allowing some of the liquid to evaporate.
11. Sprinkle with parsley and serve in the casserole dish with Creamed Spinach on the side.