

Southern Oxtails & Gravy: Fork-Tender & Flavorful Comfort Food

onions, carrots, celery, and garlic



TIME
3-4 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 3.5lb Oxtails
- 1 Carrot, small diced
- 2-3 Yellow Onions, sliced
- 10 Garlic Cloves, minced
- 1 Celery Stalk, minced
- 1 Habanero Pepper (whole, for simmering)
- 4 cups Vegetable Stock (low-sodium recommended)
- 1 Tb Beef Base Powder (or beef bouillon granules)
- 4 Tb Flour (all-purpose, for dredging & thickening)
- Salt (to taste)
- Pepper (to taste)
- Cayenne (to taste, for final adjustment)
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 2 Tb Thyme (dried)
- 1 tsp Rosemary (dried)
- 2 Tb Oil (vegetable or olive)
- 2 Tb Butter (unsalted)
- 2 Tb Cornstarch + 2 Tb Cold Water (for slurry)

Swaps and Notes:

Oxtails: Choose meaty oxtails. The long cooking time breaks down the connective tissue, making them incredibly tender.

Vegetables (Mirepoix): The diced carrot, sliced yellow onions, and minced celery form the classic "mirepoix" base, adding sweetness and aromatic depth.

Habanero Pepper: Adding it whole provides a subtle, fruity heat without overwhelming the dish. If you want more spice, you can prick it or slice it. For less spice, omit it entirely. Always remove it before serving.

Vegetable Stock: Low-sodium vegetable stock gives you more control over the saltiness. Beef broth or stock can also be used.

Beef Base Powder: Enhances the beefy flavor. Beef bouillon cubes/granules can be substituted.

Browning (Gravy & Oxtails): The recipe lists "Browning" twice. It refers to a browning liquid (like Kitchen Bouquet or Gravy Master) which adds deep color without affecting flavor, enhancing the visual appeal of both the oxtails and the gravy. Adjust quantity to your desired color.

Flour (Dredging & Thickening): All-purpose flour is used for coating the oxtails (helping with browning) and for thickening the initial gravy base.

Thyme & Rosemary: Dried herbs are robust for long simmering. Fresh sprigs can be added to the pot as well.

Cornstarch Slurry: This is a quick way to thicken the gravy to your desired consistency at the end.

Oil & Butter: The combination is excellent for searing, providing flavor and preventing butter from burning.

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's cook this rich and tender : Southern Oxtails & Gravy!
2. Season & : Coat Oxtails: Start off by seasoning the 3.5 lbs of oxtails generously on all sides with salt and pepper. In a shallow dish or large bowl, place 4 tablespoons of flour. Dredge each seasoned oxtail piece in the flour, shaking off any excess. This coating helps create a beautiful crust when seared.
3. Sear : Oxtails: Heat a large Dutch oven (or a heavy-bottomed pot) over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of oil and 2 tablespoons of butter to the pan. Once the butter is melted and shimmering, working in batches if necessary (do not overcrowd the pan!), carefully place the floured oxtails in the hot pan. Sear the oxtails on all sides for 3-4 minutes per side until they have darkened to a deep golden brown crust. Remove the seared oxtails from the pan and set them aside.
4. SautØ Vegetables: If there is excess fat remaining in the Dutch oven after searing the oxtails (more than a couple of tablespoons), you can drain some off. Add in the small diced carrot, sliced yellow onions, and minced celery stalk. SautØ the vegetables over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until they have softened and gained some color, about 5-7 minutes.
5. Add : Remaining Flour & Beef Base: Add the remainder of the flour (if you didn't use all 4 Tbsp for dredging, add the rest now, or an additional 2 Tbsp if needed for thickening), and 1 tablespoon of beef base powder to the sautØed vegetables. Season with a pinch more salt and pepper. Stir well to combine, cooking for 1-2 minutes to cook out the raw flour taste.

6. **Add : Liquids & Seasonings:** Add in the minced 10 garlic cloves. Pour in the 4 cups of vegetable stock. Stir until the flour has dispersed into the stock and the mixture begins to thicken slightly. Return the seared oxtails to the pan. Add the 2 bay leaves, 2 tablespoons of dried thyme, 1 teaspoon of dried rosemary, and the whole habanero pepper (if using, for a subtle kick). Also, add the 2 tablespoons of browning liquid now, stirring to incorporate and give the gravy a richer color.
7. **Simmer & : Tenderize:** Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring gently. Once boiling, reduce the heat to very low, cover the Dutch oven tightly with a lid, and let it simmer for at least 3 hours, or until the oxtails are incredibly fork tender and practically falling off the bone. Check occasionally to ensure sufficient liquid; if it's reducing too much, add a little more stock.
8. **Thicken : Gravy & Final Seasoning:** Towards the end of the cooking time, when the oxtails are tender, in a small bowl, whisk together 2 tablespoons of cornstarch and 2 tablespoons of cold water to form a smooth slurry. Slowly whisk this slurry into the simmering gravy. Stir gently until the gravy thickens to your desired consistency. Adjust salt, pepper, and cayenne to taste.
9. **Serve:** Carefully remove the habanero pepper and bay leaves from the gravy before serving. Dish out a generous portion of steamed white rice, and top it with the tender oxtails and plenty of the rich, savory gravy.

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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Sear for Flavor: Don't skip searing the oxtails!

This creates a beautiful crust and builds deep, complex flavors (fond) in the pan, which then become the base of your gravy.

Low and Slow is Key: Oxtails require patience.

The long, slow braising time is essential for breaking down the tough connective tissue, resulting in incredibly tender, fall-off-the-bone meat.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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