

Beef and Barley Soup: Hearty Homestyle Comfort for Chilly Days

Beef and Barley Soup: Hearty Homestyle Comfort for Your Soul!



TIME
6 min

METHOD
Slow cooker

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ lbs beef stew meat, cut into small cubes (chuck roast is ideal)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 carrots, sliced (about ½-inch thick)
- 2 celery stalks, sliced (about ½-inch thick)
- 1 cup pearl barley, rinsed
- 8 cups beef broth (low sodium preferred)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms (optional, cremini or button)
- Fresh parsley, for garnish (optional)

Swaps and Notes:

Beef Stew Meat: Beef chuck is excellent for stewing due to its marbling and connective tissue, which breaks down beautifully. Cut into small cubes for faster cooking.

Pearl Barley: Essential for the classic texture and heartiness. Quick-cooking barley can be used for even faster results (adjust cooking time).

Beef Broth: Low-sodium beef broth allows you to control the overall saltiness. You can use homemade beef stock for richer flavor.

Tomato Paste: Adds umami depth and a touch of color to the broth.

Dried Herbs: Thyme and parsley are classic for beef and barley. Feel free to use fresh herbs (about 3 times the amount) and add them towards the end of cooking.

Mushrooms (Optional): Add an earthy flavor and extra texture.

Worcestershire Sauce: Adds a subtle tang and umami boost, enhancing the beef flavor.

Vegetables: Feel free to add other root vegetables like parsnips or turnips, or even some frozen peas towards the end of cooking.

Directions:

Brown Beef: Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the beef cubes and brown them on all sides, about 5-6 minutes. Work in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding the pot, which would steam the beef instead of browning it. Remove the browned beef and set aside.

Sauté Aromatics & Veggies: In the same pot (don't clean it! Those browned bits are pure flavor!), add the chopped onion, minced garlic, sliced carrots, and sliced celery. Sauté until softened, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add Tomato Paste & Mushrooms: Stir in the tomato paste with the sautéed vegetables and cook for another minute, stirring, to allow it to caramelize slightly. If using, add the chopped mushrooms now and cook for 3-4 minutes until softened.

Return Beef & Add Liquids/Seasonings: Return the browned beef to the pot. Pour in the 8 cups beef broth. Add the rinsed pearl barley, dried thyme, dried parsley, bay leaf, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and black pepper. Stir everything well to combine.

Simmer & Tenderize: Bring the soup to a boil, then immediately reduce the heat to low. Let it simmer uncovered (or partially covered to allow some evaporation for thickening) for 45-60 minutes, or until the beef is fork-tender and the barley is cooked through and plump. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Discard Bay Leaf & Adjust Seasoning: Remove the bay leaf from the soup. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper to taste if needed.

Garnish & Serve: Ladle the hot Beef and Barley Soup into bowls. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley before serving.

Tips for Success:

Sear Beef Well: Browning the beef is crucial for developing deep, rich flavor in the final soup.

DIRECTIONS

1. Making this : Hearty Homestyle Beef and Barley Soup is a straightforward process, letting the simmering develop deep flavors!
2. Brown : Beef: Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the beef cubes and brown them on all sides, about 5-6 minutes. Work in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding the pot, which would steam the beef instead of browning it. Remove the browned beef and set aside.
3. SautØ Aromatics & Veggies: In the same pot (don't clean it! Those browned bits are pure flavor!), add the chopped onion, minced garlic, sliced carrots, and sliced celery. SautØ until softened, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add : Tomato Paste & Mushrooms: Stir in the tomato paste with the sautØed vegetables and cook for another minute, stirring, to allow it to caramelize slightly. If using, add the chopped mushrooms now and cook for 3-4 minutes until softened.
5. Return : Beef & Add Liquids/Seasonings: Return the browned beef to the pot. Pour in the 8 cups beef broth. Add the rinsed pearl barley, dried thyme, dried parsley, bay leaf, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and black pepper. Stir everything well to combine.
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7. **Discard : Bay Leaf & Adjust Seasoning:** Remove the bay leaf from the soup. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper to taste if needed.
8. **Garnish & : Serve:** Ladle the hot Beef and Barley Soup into bowls. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley before serving.
9. **Tips for Success: Sear Beef Well:** Browning the beef is crucial for developing deep, rich flavor in the final soup.
10. **Rinse : Barley:** Rinsing pearl barley before adding it removes excess starch, which can help prevent the soup from becoming overly gummy.
11. **Low & : Slow Simmer:** A gentle simmer allows the beef to become tender and the flavors to meld beautifully.
12. **Adjust : Consistency:** If the soup gets too thick for your liking during simmering, add a little more beef broth or water. If too thin, you can continue to simmer uncovered for a bit longer, or remove a ladle of broth, whisk in a tablespoon of cornstarch, and return to the pot to thicken.
13. **Flavor : Melds:** This soup tastes even better the next day as the flavors continue to deepen.
14. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Hearty Homestyle Beef and Barley Soup is a complete and incredibly satisfying meal on its own. It's wonderful served with:
 15. Crusty bread or dinner rolls for soaking up the broth.
 16. A side of cornbread or crackers.
 17. A simple green salad with a light vinaigrette to complement the richness.
18. For other comforting beef dishes, you might also enjoy my Classic, Hearty Beef Stew (a very similar, equally delicious dish!) or my tender Braised Oxtails with their rich gravy.
19. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Beef and Barley Soup is fantastic as leftovers! Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. The barley will continue to absorb liquid, so the soup will thicken upon cooling. To reheat, gently warm in a pot on the stovetop over low heat, adding a splash of beef broth or water to thin it back to your desired consistency. You can also microwave individual portions. This soup also freezes exceptionally well for up to 3 months; thaw in the refrigerator overnight before reheating.
20. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you loved the tender beef and comforting flavors of this soup, here are a few more fantastic savory recipes that I think you'll absolutely love:
 21. For another soulful, slow-cooked dish, check out my This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo Is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort.
 22. If you're a fan of quick and flavorful beef dishes, my Beef Miso Ramen is a must-try.
 23. For a comforting, one-pan meal, my : Cheesy Ground Beef Rice Casserole is a great option.
 24. And for a tender beef dish from the slow cooker, my Slow Cooker Beef Brisket with BBQ Sauce is a fantastic choice.

25. Final Thoughts: This Beef and Barley Soup is a true classic - a hearty, flavorful bowl of homestyle comfort that's perfect for nourishing your body and soul. It's easy to make, incredibly satisfying, and tastes even better the next day. Give it a simmer, and enjoy this delicious comfort!

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Low & Slow Simmer: A gentle simmer allows the beef to become tender and the flavors to meld beautifully.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/beef-and-barley-soup-hearty-homestyle-comfort-for-chilly-days/>