Beef, Barley and Root Vegetable Pot

About 3 quarts/2.8 liters; 6 substantial servings | Active 30 min | Cook 165 min | Total 190 min

Ingredients

- 2 lb lean boneless beef chuck, visible fat trimmed (900 g), cut into 1 1/2-inch/4 cm cubes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (30 ml/28 g)
- 1 large onion (200 g), diced
- 3 garlic cloves (9 g), minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste (32 g)
- 5 cups low-sodium beef broth (1.2 liters/1200 g)
- 1 cup water (240 ml/240 g)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme (1 g)
- 1 teaspoon fine salt (6 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g)
- 1 cup pearl barley (180 g), rinsed
- 3 large carrots (300 g), cut into 3/4-inch/2 cm chunks
- 2 medium parsnips (250 g peeled weight), cut into 3/4-inch/2 cm chunks
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar (15 ml/15 g)

Set out

6-quart/5.7-liter heavy Dutch oven with lid, Tongs, Wooden spoon, Fine-mesh sieve

Allergens

Barley (gluten), Check broth label for additional allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Pat beef dry. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in the Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Brown half the beef for 5–7 minutes, turning to color two sides, and move to a plate. Repeat with remaining oil and beef.

2. Reduce heat to medium. Add onion to the pot and cook 5 minutes, scraping up browned bits. Add garlic and tomato paste and stir 1 minute. Pour in broth and water, scraping the bottom clean. Return beef and its juices; add thyme, salt and pepper.

3. Bring just to a simmer, cover and cook over low heat for 1 hour 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Check a beef cube: it should be approaching tenderness. If still firm and springy, simmer another 15–30 minutes before proceeding.

4. Stir in barley, carrot and parsnip. Cover partly and simmer 40–50 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes, until beef is fork-tender and has exceeded 145°F/63°C for at least 3 minutes, barley is tender with a slight chew and roots are tender without disintegrating. Add hot water, 1/4 cup/60 ml at a time, if needed to keep a spoonable stew consistency.

5. Stir in vinegar, let stand 5 minutes, and divide the entire pot into six portions.

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Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 440 kcal | Protein: 38.6 g | Carbohydrate: 41.3 g | Fat: 14.6 g | Fiber: 9.0 g. One of 6 servings. Batch yield: About 3 quarts/2.8 liters; 6 substantial servings. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

Let the long cook do useful work

This pot suits an afternoon when you are already home. Set a timer for the beef check and another after the barley goes in, rather than relying on memory while doing other tasks. The meal prep benefit comes from dividing six finished portions, not from leaving a simmering pot unattended outside the house.

A useful detail

The 190-minute total is a realistic planning estimate, not a promise that every cut of chuck will soften on an identical schedule. Allow extra time if the beef needs it.

Another way

Replace the parsnip with the same peeled weight of turnip for a less sweet finish.

Use 1 teaspoon dried rosemary instead of thyme, crushing it before adding so the leaves do not stay wiry.

Keep it well

Divide into shallow containers and refrigerate at 40°F/4°C or below within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep up to 3 days or freeze up to 3 months. Reheat to 165°F/74°C, adding water as needed and stirring from the bottom. Transport refrigerated portions with two cold sources in an insulated bag.