RECIPE

Beef Barley Soup

A thick, chewy dinner soup of lean beef, pearl barley, white beans and vegetables in a deeply savoury beef broth.

MAKES

6 servings US Metric

TOTAL

2 h 45 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 12 oz boneless beef eye of round, trimmed of all fat, cut in ¾-in cubes
- [ ] 1 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] ¼ tsp salt
- [ ] ½ tsp black pepper
- [ ] 1 large onion (about 7 oz), peeled and chopped
- [ ] 3 medium carrots (about 6 oz), peeled and sliced
- [ ] 2 stalks celery, sliced
- [ ] ½ tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 2 tbsp tomato paste
- [ ] 1 tsp dried thyme
- [ ] 2 bay leaves
- [ ] 8 cups no-salt-added beef broth
- [ ] ¾ cup pearl barley
- [ ] 1 can (15 oz) no-salt-added white beans, drained and rinsed

Method

1. Cut every bit of visible fat off the beef (it is not eaten), then pat it dry and sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Set a Dutch oven on medium-high and warm the oil in it. Brown the beef, about 6 minutes, and move it to a plate.

2. Add the onion, carrots and celery to the same pot. Cook, stirring, about 6 minutes, until the onion is soft. Stir in the garlic powder, tomato paste and thyme for 1 minute, until the paste darkens a shade.

3. Pour in a cup of the broth and scrape up the brown bits. Add the beef and its juices, the rest of the broth and the bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then turn down to a gentle simmer and cover.

- [ ] 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

4. Simmer 1 hour 15 minutes, until a piece of beef breaks apart when pressed with a spoon. Water boils lower here, so this takes about a quarter longer than the recipes we read.

5. Stir in the barley and the white beans and cover the pot again. Simmer 50 to 60 minutes more, stirring now and then, until the barley is chewy but tender and the beef is soft. Taste a grain, not the clock.

6. Take out the bay leaves. If the soup is thicker than you like, stir in water or broth, a ½ cup at a time. Stir in the parsley; the ¼ tsp of salt measured in is all the recipe adds.

7. Cool no more than 2 hours, then refrigerate, covered, up to 4 days. Reheat to a boil, adding a splash of water or broth, since the barley keeps drinking.