

# Savory Beef Stew with Roasted Vegetables

## Stew:

1 $\frac{3}{4}$  to 2 lbs. beef for stew,  
cut into 1-inch pieces  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. pepper  
1 (13 $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.) can  
ready-to-serve beef broth

2 tsps. dried thyme  
1 tbsp. cornstarch, dissolved  
in 2 tsps. water  
2 tsps. balsamic vinegar  
3 cups couscous, cooked

## Roasted Vegetables:

12 med. mushrooms  
6 plum tomatoes, quartered  
and seeded  
3 sm. onions, quartered  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsps. olive oil  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsps. balsamic vinegar

Heat 1 tbsp. oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until hot. Brown beef with garlic in batches; pour off drippings. Return beef to pan; season with pepper. Stir in broth and thyme; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover tightly and simmer 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  to 2 hours or until beef is fork-tender.

Meanwhile heat oven to 425 degrees. Place vegetables in lightly oiled jelly roll pan. Drizzle with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsps. oil and vinegar; toss. Roast in 425-degree oven 20 to 25 minutes or until tender.

Stir cornstarch mixture into stew; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in vegetables and 2 tsps. vinegar. Serve with couscous.

Makes 6 servings.

## Just Stew It

**F**or ages, people have relied on hearty, wholesome stew recipes to keep warm on winter nights. What better way to make cold noses and frosty fingertips feel better than with a robust and flavorful bowl of stew? Stew has come a long way from broth, vegetables and meat. The following are some quick ways to enhance traditional stew recipes:

- **Serve it with a starch.** Fresh-baked cornbread makes an excellent side dish to stew. Thick, buttery cornbread will cleanse the palate between bites and it can also be used to sop up every last drop. Other breads that are just as delicious with stews are stone-ground wheat and potato bread.
- **Top it off.** Adding traditional baked-potato toppings such as shredded cheese, crisp chives and a dollop of sour cream can add a surprising twist to traditional stews. Be imaginative when it comes to spices as well. Instead of using just salt and pepper, try adding dill, oregano or rosemary.
- **Quick fix.** If you've accidentally added too much salt to your stew, drop in a few chunks of raw potato. The pieces will absorb the salt during the cooking process. Then, simply discard them when your stew is thoroughly cooked.
- **Bulk them up.** Thicken watery stews by adding rice or polenta. This will give them a better consistency and make them more satisfying. And don't hesitate to add your favorite winter vegetables and herbs to provide a personal touch to your stews.
- **Cut the fat.** If fat floats to the surface of your stew, drop a few ice cubes into the pot and stir. As soon as the fat begins to cling to the cubes, remove them before they melt. Lettuce leaves are said to have the same effect.
- **Cure the burn.** Save stews that have been overcooked or burnt by adding some milk. Milk will mask the burnt flavor.

Stew recipes are common in many cultures around the world. Some popular varieties include Hungarian goulash, Irish stew, Indian mulligatawny, jambalaya or French ragout. Consult a cookbook for ideas your whole family will enjoy or try the recipe printed above.