

A comfort classic for cold nights

We all have our favorite comfort foods, said Amy Traverso and Juliet Glass in *Sunset*. Chicken potpies, lasagna, and mac 'n' cheese are three that come to mind. Another that we're particularly fond of this time of year is beef-ale stew, a British dish that we've given "a delicious update." It's guaranteed to keep you warm during the chilliest evening.

Recipe of the week Beef-Ale Stew and Green-Onion Buttermilk Dumplings

4 lbs beef chuck, trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1½-inch pieces
2 cups plus 6 tbsp flour
3¾ tsp salt
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 bottles (12 oz each) ale
2 large onions, thinly sliced
8 oz mushrooms, trimmed and quartered
3 large carrots, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cut into 1-inch pieces
½ cup thinly sliced green onions (green part only)
½ tsp baking soda
4½ tbsp cold butter, cut into small pieces
About ¾ cup buttermilk
1 egg



Jim Franco

A bowl to raise your temperature

In large bowl, toss beef with 3 tbsp flour, 1 tsp salt, and pepper. In large pot, heat 1 tbsp vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Add enough beef to pot to form single layer (about ⅓ of total), being careful not to overcrowd. Brown meat on all sides, about 7 minutes. Transfer to large bowl and brown remaining beef in similar batches. If meat or pan juices start to scorch, reduce heat.

Add 1 bottle ale to pot, scraping up brown bits with wooden spoon. Pour ale over beef

and return empty pot to medium-high heat. Add remaining tbsp oil to pot. Add onions and 2 tsp salt. Cook, stirring often, 2 minutes. Cover pot, reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions have hint of gold color, about 20 minutes. Remove lid, raise heat to medium-high, stir in 3 tbsp flour. Cook, stirring often, 3 minutes. Add mushrooms, reserved beef and ale, remaining bottle of ale, and carrots. Bring to boil. Cover and lower heat to gentle simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until beef is tender, about 3 hours.

About 40 minutes before serving, make dumplings. In medium bowl, stir together remaining 2 cups flour, green onions, remaining ¾ tsp salt, baking soda. Using pastry blender or your fingers, work cold butter into flour mixture until it resembles cornmeal with some pea-size pieces. In another bowl, whisk together buttermilk and egg. Gently fold wet ingredients into dry, mixing until a very shaggy dough forms. If more liquid is needed, add additional buttermilk 1 tbsp at a time. Gently form dough into 12 equally sized balls and drop into stew for final 20 to 30 minutes or until dumplings are fluffy and cooked through. Let sit 15 minutes before serving; stew will thicken as it cools. Serves 6 to 8.