

Thinking Outside the Box!



Pressure Cooker Irish Stew

To lose weight, you need to be in a calorie deficit. No matter how many different diets are out there, at the end of the day, calories do matter. Ideally, a nutrient rich diet that can be maintained long-term and is adopted as a lifestyle is what should be the goal. No matter how many new diets are out there promoting the answer for weight loss, the answer truly is you still have to consume fewer calories than you burn off.

A healthy eating pattern is one that can be maintained to meet health and wellness goals and reduce the risk of chronic disease while meeting the nutrient needs of the body. It really isn't that complicated. Those that consume all of their calories from high sugar, high fat foods, but still remains in a calorie deficit, will still lose weight. But they won't be nourished with key vitamins, minerals, fiber and protein and may be consuming too much fat and sodium that increases the risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease and hypertension. Yet, those that consume only nutrient rich, "whole" or "health foods", but do so in a caloric surplus will gain weight and the excess calories will likely be stored as fat.

The key is balance. Adopting an eating pattern that is at the calorie level to meet your goal (maintaining, building muscle or losing fat). The choices of foods that are made to hit that calorie level are then what nourishes you and reduces your risk of chronic disease.

Not all produce has to be fresh. Consuming adequate amounts and a variety of different colors of fruits and vegetable is more important. The key is to choose a balance that works for you. Meet your needs with a combination of fresh, frozen and canned. Just be sure when choosing frozen and canned to select items with no added sugars or fats, and those that are low in sodium. Use whatever combination works for you to meet the recommendations.

Finally, a meal doesn't have to be separate components to be healthy. Often times when healthy meals are featured like in a magazine, it displays separate items neatly plated. Meals don't have to be like this to be healthy nor does one have to use a variety of cooking methods and lots of pan to create a nutritious meal. One pan dishes such as soups, stews, and casseroles, can be very nutritious, easy, and quick. The key is to do what works for your lifestyle.

This meal features a stew loaded with different types of vegetables and your choice of lean protein. It is quick, easy and one pot. Double the batch and freeze it, so you have it at the ready for quick dinners, when you are too tired to cook. It is lower in calories than most fast food choices, so it will assist with keeping your calorie intake in check. It will stick to your ribs and keep you feeling full.

Ingredients: 6 servings

- 1.5 lbs. raw meat cut large cubes (see notes)
- 3 tbsps. olive oil
- 12-14 oz. canned low-sodium crushed tomato
- 4-5 carrots, cut into large chunks
- 4 medium baking potatoes, cut into large cubes
- 3 stalks of celery, sliced thin.
- 2 medium white onion, diced
- 14 oz. low-sodium broth
- 12 oz. of beer, ale or additional low-sodium broth
- 3 tbsp. wine vinegar
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 bay leaves
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¾ cup fresh parsley chopped (optional)

Directions:

1. Begin heating the pressure cooker to medium-high heat, or use the sauté function.
2. Quickly mix the cubed meat with the olive oil, salt and pepper, toss to coat evenly.
3. In batches, sear the cubed meat on all sides. Do not cook through.
4. Remove the seared meat from the cooker, and add the garlic and onions. Stir continuously for about one minute to enrich the flavors. Do not let it burn.
5. Quickly add the broth, to de-glaze the pan, scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen the remnants.
6. Add back the cubed meat and the remaining ingredients, less the fresh parsley.
7. Place the lid on the cooker and set it for 14 minutes. If there is no timer, than let it come to pressure and then set a timer for 14 minutes (then turn off). Let the cooker sit for 10-15 minutes and then do a quick release according to the manufacturer's instructions.
8. Serve ¼ of the stew in a bowl, topped with a little fresh chopped parsley (optional), and a piece of whole wheat bakery bread along the side for dunking.

Notes:

- Any combination of stewed meat can be used. Best to choose leaner proteins such as boneless skinless chicken breast, pork loin, beef top round and/or lamb rump). Can use one type or mix it up. A little lamb mixed in or all lamb makes this dish the most authentic.
- This dish can be made on the stove top, follow steps 1-6 using a large Dutch oven or pot with a lid. Turn the heat down to medium to so the stew is at a simmer not a boil. Cover, and then let cook for about 1 hour. Remove lid and cook for an additional 30 minutes. Be sure while on the stove to stir occasionally and watch for burning.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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