

Oxtail Soup

12 servings

Ingredients:

3 – 4# oxtail, cut into 1½ “ chunks
flour for dredging – ½ a cup or so
3 tablespoons beef drippings, bacon drippings, or vegetable oil
2 medium sized yellow onions
3 T flour
3 litres of water, or ½ water ½ pre-made beef stock (note: if using bouillion to create a stock, only use enough to flavour 1.5 litres)
3 T tomato paste
2 t salt
¼ t pepper
1 bay leaf
5 cloves
6 – 7 sprigs of thyme
a small handful of parsley
3 medium carrots, diced
1 good-sized stalk of celery, diced
¾ cup pot barley (pearl's ok in a pinch)
½ c dry sherry (optional)
1 – 2 T soya sauce

A piece of cheesecloth and some kitchen string for tying up the herbs.

Directions:

Heat the drippings or oil in a large, heavy pot, over medium high heat.
Dredge the oxtails in the flour.
Sear the oxtails, rotating to get as much browning as possible.
Remove to a paper towel lined plate. Continue searing until all are browned.
Turn the heat down to medium, and cook the diced onions, while stirring frequently, for about 8 minutes, until slightly browned.
Sprinkle in the 3 T of flour.
Cook while stirring until thickened.
Slowly add in the water, stock (if using), tomato paste, salt & pepper while stirring.
Lay out the cheesecloth, and group the herbs & cloves on it. Tie it up with a bit of kitchen string.
Add the herbs to the pot.
Return the seared oxtails to the pot, making sure there's enough liquid to cover them (add in a bit if needed).
Bring the stock to a boil.
Cover and reduce the heat to a simmer.
Continue cooking for 3 hours on low.
The meat should be fork tender, and slipping off the bone. Cook a little longer if necessary.
Using a slotted spoon or tongs, remove all of the meat & bones from the stock and into a bowl.
Remove and discard the wrapped herbs.

Let the stock cool, stirring occasionally, until it is cool enough to put in the fridge overnight. It cools faster if you pour it into a roasting pan, so that it isn't so deep and has more surface area. If it's cold out, you can put it out on the porch to cool, before moving it to the fridge.

Cool the meat & bones.

Pull away as much meat as you can from the bones, discarding any obvious bits of fat and gristle along with the bones.

Chop the meat, and reserve covered in the fridge until the next day.

The next day - 1½ hours before serving:

Skim any fat off the stock. Discard.

Reheat the stock over medium heat.

Peel, trim and dice the carrots.

Trim and dice the celery.

Add the beef, carrots, and celery to the stock.

Bring to a boil.

Add in the barley.

Lower the heat to a simmer.

Let cook for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add in the sherry.

Test for seasoning. The better seared the meat, the better the stock. If you feel it needs a little something, just add a tablespoon or two of soya sauce. Do not add salt.