

TUSCAN BEEF STEW

A great mid-week stew – easy to prepare and brilliant served with potatoes and veg of your choice – see notes at the end of the recipe. It's very rich, so you don't need loads!

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp olive oil

3 cloves garlic, finely diced

2 tsp rosemary, finely chopped

750 gm, braising or stewing steak

5 level tbsp tomato puree

7 tbsp red wine

¼ tsp mixed spice

salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the oven to 170 degrees (or use a slow cooker).

Heat the olive oil in a casserole dish which can be transferred to the oven.

Gently fry the garlic and the rosemary in the oil for about 5 minutes, making sure it doesn't burn. It should just start to colour - no more.

Add the steak a little at a time (about a handful) so that the temperature of the oil doesn't drop too much, and brown the meat. If you add too much, you won't be able to sear the meat. I sometimes do this in a separate pan at a high heat, and then transfer to the garlic and rosemary mix.

Add the mixed spice and the salt and pepper.

Add the wine, and boil to reduce by about half.

Add the tomato puree mixed with a little warm water to thin it, and simmer whilst stirring for a couple of minutes.

Add enough water to just cover the meat, bring to a simmer, and put in the oven for a couple of hours (or if using a slow cooker – 4 hours on high, 8 on low).

Check from time to time if more hot water is needed. The sauce should be thick, but not dry.

Serve with diced, roast potatoes, fried zucchini/courgette sticks, or roasted fennel.

(Note: The picture shows thyme and bay leaf, but the recipe contains neither – it was the closest image I could find to the look of the stew!)