

## Beef Barley Stoup

1 pound beef, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
Salt and pepper, for seasoning meat  
Flour, for dusting meat  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
3/4 cup chopped onion  
3/4 cup chopped carrots  
2 stalks celery, chopped  
8 ounces mushrooms, sliced  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
1/2 cup dry red wine  
1 14.5-ounce can stewed tomatoes  
4 cups homemade or low-sodium beef broth  
1 bay leaf  
3 small sprigs thyme (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)  
1/2 cup uncooked pearl barley  
Salt and pepper, to taste

Season cubed meat with salt and pepper, then toss with some flour to dust it. In a large soup pot or dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add beef to pot, and sear cubes on all sides until browned. Remove to a bowl and set aside.

Add onion, carrots, celery, and mushrooms and cook about 8 to 10 minutes, until mushrooms start to brown. Add the minced garlic and tomato paste in the last minute of cooking.

Pour in the red wine and deglaze the pot, scraping up the browned bits. Add the stewed tomatoes, beef broth, bay leaf and thyme sprigs. Stir well to combine. Add the meat, including any accumulated juices in the bowl.

Bring to a boil, then stir in the barley. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, for about 45-60 minutes or until the barley is cooked. Remove bay leaf and thyme sprigs and taste for additional salt and pepper. Serve in bowls with crusty bread for dipping/sopping.