

Pork Stew

Serves 6

Pork butt, also called Boston butt and pork shoulder, needs to be braised to become tender. This simple stew comes together quickly and easily well, if you want to double the recipe. Serve with crusty bread or mashed potatoes and a salad.

4 small carrots, about $\frac{3}{4}$ pound, peeled
2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds boneless pork butt, trimmed of excess fat
Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 cups frozen pearl onions, defrosted (see Note)
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
4 parsley stems
1 bay leaf
1 thyme sprig
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Zinfandel
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup amontillado sherry
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-salt chicken broth
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 tablespoons reserved fat or unsalted butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons fish sauce (optional)
Fresh lemon juice as needed
Chopped parsley (optional garnish)

Instructions: Cut carrots into pieces about the size of the pearl onions. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside. Cut pork into $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes, then season to taste with salt and pepper. Add oil to medium pot over high heat. Brown meat, cooking in batches as needed (cook any fatty pieces longer as needed to render more fat). Move browned cubes to a separate bowl and reserve.

Pour off excess fat and reserve but keep the browned bits in the bottom of the pan. Decrease heat to medium. Add the carrots and onions to the same pan. The vegetables' moisture should help deglaze it. Stir vegetables frequently, scraping up the fond. When pan is deglazed (about 2-3 minutes), add garlic and cook until aromatic.

Temporarily move vegetables to a separate bowl. Add meat

back to pot along with parsley stems, bay leaf and thyme, Zinfandel, sherry and broth. The liquid should almost cover the meat, otherwise add more (in equal amounts). Add vegetables back to the pot; cover and simmer 45 minutes or until meat is fork-tender. Check liquid level and stir at least once, about halfway through cooking.

Meanwhile, combine $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons butter or reserved fat with flour in a small saucepan to form a roux; cook over medium heat until it starts to look grainy, then decrease heat to medium-low. Cook about 1 minute more, then remove saucepan from heat.

When meat is tender, pour off the sauce, then skim the fat. Remove and discard thyme stem, bay leaf and parsley stems from stew meat and vegetables; cover pot to keep warm.

Return small saucepan containing roux over medium heat and slowly whisk in defrosted sauce. Simmer to thick to desired consistency and avoid the "pasty flour" taste. There should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sauce.

Add thickened sauce back to the meat and vegetable pot. Rewarm, taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, fish sauce and lemon juice if needed. Garnish with parsley if desired and serve immediately.

Note: Use fresh pearl onions when in season. Before cooking, blanch them in boiling water to help remove the paper-thin skin.

Per serving: 470 calories, 29 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 29 g fat (11 g saturated), 116 mg cholesterol, 125 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.