

Hearty Low-Glycemic Beef and Barley Stew

A nourishing cold-weather stew featuring lean beef, fiber-rich barley, and colorful vegetables designed to keep blood sugar stable while delivering maximum comfort.

Prep: 20 min

Cook: 90 min

Total: 110 min

Servings: 6

GL 6.5 / GI 28

Ingredients

High-quality protein; trim all visible fat lean beef round steak, trimmed

Heart-healthy monounsaturated fat canola oil

Contains quercetin; may improve insulin sensitivity yellow onions, diced

Very low GI; adds fiber and crunch celery, diced

Low GI; rich in lycopene Roma tomatoes, diced

Lower GI than white potato (GI ~54); keep skin on for fiber sweet potato, diced with skin

Moderate GI when eaten with skin; balanced with other vegetables white potato with skin, diced

Virtually zero GI; adds umami depth mushrooms, diced

Raw GI ~16; cooking increases slightly but still low carrot, diced

May improve insulin sensitivity garlic cloves, chopped

Nutrient-dense; extremely low GI; high fiber kale, chopped

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Excellent low-GI grain (GI ~28); rich in beta-glucan fiber pearl barley, uncooked

Acetic acid may lower post-meal glucose red wine vinegar

Adds depth; vinegar helps moderate blood sugar balsamic vinegar

Choose low-sodium to control blood pressure low-sodium vegetable or beef stock

Traditional herb with potential glucose-lowering properties dried sage, crushed

Aromatic herb; adds complexity fresh thyme, minced

Fresh herb; vitamin K and antioxidants fresh parsley, minced

Contains carvacrol; may support healthy glucose metabolism dried oregano

May enhance insulin sensitivity dried rosemary, minced

Piperine may improve nutrient absorption black pepper, to taste

Instructions

Step 1

Preheat your grill or broiler to medium heat. While heating, trim all visible fat and connective tissue from the beef round steak using a sharp knife. Pat the meat dry with paper towels to ensure good browning.

Step 2

Place the trimmed steak on the grill or under the broiler. Cook for 12 to 14 minutes total, flipping once halfway through, until the internal temperature reaches 135°F for medium-rare. Avoid overcooking to keep the meat tender. Remove from heat, tent loosely with foil, and let rest for 10 minutes while you prepare the vegetables.

Step 3

Heat the canola oil in a large, heavy-bottomed stock pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the diced onions, celery, carrots, sweet potato, white potato, mushrooms, and tomatoes. Sauté for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften and develop light golden-brown edges.

Step 4

Add the minced garlic to the pot and cook for 1 minute until fragrant. Stir in the pearl barley and continue cooking for 5 minutes, stirring frequently to toast the grains slightly and prevent sticking. This step enhances the nutty flavor of the barley.

Step 5

While the barley toasts, cut the rested beef into half-inch cubes, cutting against the grain for maximum tenderness. Add the beef pieces to the pot along with any accumulated juices from the resting plate.

Step 6

Pour in the red wine vinegar and balsamic vinegar, stirring to deglaze the bottom of the pot and lift any flavorful browned bits. Add the beef stock, chopped kale, sage, thyme, parsley, oregano, rosemary, and black pepper. Stir everything together thoroughly.

Step 7

Bring the stew to a rolling boil over high heat, then immediately reduce to a gentle simmer. Cover partially and cook for 60 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until the barley is tender and chewy, the vegetables are soft, and the liquid has reduced to a thick, hearty consistency. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional black pepper if desired.

Step 8

Remove from heat and let the stew rest for 5 minutes before serving. This allows the flavors to meld and the stew to thicken further. Serve hot in deep bowls, ensuring each portion contains a good mix of beef, vegetables, and barley. Store leftovers in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 3 months.