Beef Stew in Spicy Berbere Sauce

This hearty stew is even easier to make than the classic American version.

PREP AND COOK TIME: 20 minutes prep, plus 2 hours cook time
MAKES: 6 servings
NOTES: A generous dose of cayenne gives this stew a lively heat. If you prefer milder spice, reduce the amount to 1 or 2 teaspoons.

- 2 medium onions, quartered lengthwise
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon *each* ground paprika and cayenne (see notes)
- 1 teaspoon *each* ground cumin and fenugreek (optional; see "Ethiopian Cooking 101," far right)
- 1/2 teaspoon *each* ground turmeric, cinnamon, and cardamom
- 1/4 teaspoon *each* ground cloves and allspice
- 1 can (14 1/2 oz.) crushed tomatoes in purée
- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 2 1/2 pounds boned beef chuck, fat trimmed, cut into 3/4-inch chunks
- Salt

1. In a food processor, pulse onions until very finely diced (almost puréed).

2. Melt butter in 4- to 5-quart pan over medium-high heat. Add onions and stir until browned, about 10 minutes.

3. Add ginger, paprika, cayenne, cumin, fenugreek, turmeric, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and allspice; stir until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, wine, and beef; bring to a simmer, then cover, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until beef is very tender when pierced, about 2 hours. Add salt to taste.

Per serving: 400 cal., 50% (198 cal.) from fat; 38 g protein; 22 g fat (10 g sat.); 11 g carbo (1.6 g fiber); 336 mg sodium; 144 mg chol.

Injera (Ethiopian flatbread)

In this version, buckwheat flour and club soda mimic the crumpetlike texture of real injera (see "Ethiopian Cooking 101," far right).

PREP AND COOK TIME: 40 minutes
MAKES: 12 flatbreads; 6 servings
NOTES: If you can't find buckwheat flour, substitute all-purpose flour; add an extra 1/2-cup of club soda and another 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder.

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups buckwheat flour (see notes)
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- About 3 cups club soda

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder, and salt. Add eggs and club soda and whisk until batter is smooth. It should have the consistency of pancake batter; add more club soda if needed.

2. Spray a 10-inch nonstick frying pan lightly with cooking oil spray and set over medium heat. When hot, pour 1/3 cup batter into the pan, tilting to coat most of the bottom. Cook until flatbread appears bubbly and dry on top, 2 to 3 minutes; do not turn.

3. Slide bread onto a serving platter. Cover with a kitchen towel and keep warm in a 200° oven while you cook remaining breads.

4. Place one injera flat on each of six dinner plates and top with stew. Serve with remaining injera to scoop up the food.

Per serving: 247 cal., 14% (35 cal.) from fat; 9 g protein; 4 g fat (0.8 g sat.); 46 g carbo (4.6 g fiber); 831 mg sodium; 71 mg chol.

Lemony Lentils

Even the lentil skeptics in our kitchen loved this bright, zingy stew.

PREP AND COOK TIME: 10 minutes prep, plus about 25 minutes cook time
MAKES: 6 servings

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups yellow or brown lentils, sorted for debris and rinsed
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- Grated peel from 1 lemon (yellow part only)
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- Salt and pepper
- Chopped cilantro and lemon wedges

1. Melt butter in a 3-quart pan over medium-high heat. Add garlic and stir until just beginning to brown, about 1 minute.

2. Add lentils and stir to coat with butter, then add broth. Simmer, covered, until lentils are tender but not mushy, 20 to 30 minutes. They will thicken as they cool.

3. Stir in ginger, lemon peel, juice, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with chopped cilantro and lemon wedges on the side.

Per serving: 276 cal., 20% (50 cal.) from fat; 20 g protein; 5.5 g fat (3 g sat.); 39 g carbo (7.4 g fiber); 118 mg sodium; 13 mg chol.

Ethiopian cooking 101

Berbere

This heady spice mixture is the basis for all Ethiopian cooking. It can feature clove, cayenne, ginger, cumin, turmeric, and cinnamon, among other spices. Ground fenugreek seeds, which add a mildly sweet flavor, are also typical. Buy them at Middle Eastern markets or from Penzeys Spices *($1.09 per 1/4-cup jar; www.penzeys.com or 800/741-7787).*

Injera

Authentic injera is made from fermented *teff*, a grain common in Ethiopia. The bread's spongy, bubbly texture is similar to that of a pancake. If authenticity is your aim, you can buy teff flour from Abyssinian Market *($25 for 5 lb.; www.abyssinianmarket.com).*

Tej

This Ethiopian honey wine is the traditional match for spicy stews, but few retailers in the United States carry authentic imported *tej*. You can buy a bottle at many Ethiopian restaurants, but an accessible alternative is off-dry Riesling, which pairs beautifully with the spicy beef stew. Our favorite: Spätlese Rieslings from Germany's Mosel region.