

Albanian Stew

Traditional Albanian stew with tender beef, onions, and tomato paste. This hearty Balkan comfort food recipe serves 6 and takes just over an hour to make.

15 min

PREP

50 min

COOK

1h 5min

TOTAL

6

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 3.3 lb beef
- 4 onion
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp salt

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the ingredients**

Cut 3.3 pounds of beef into 2-inch chunks, patting dry with paper towels. Peel and dice 4 onions into ½-inch pieces.
- 2 Heat the fat**

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil and 1 tablespoon butter in a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat until the butter foams and subsides, about 2 minutes.
- 3 Brown the beef**

Add beef chunks in a single layer without overcrowding and brown on all sides, about 8-10 minutes total. Transfer browned beef to a plate and set aside.
- 4 Cook the onions**

Reduce heat to medium and add diced onions to the same pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden brown, about 8-10 minutes.

5 **Add tomato paste**

Stir in 2 tablespoons tomato paste and cook until darkened and fragrant, about 1-2 minutes.

6 **Simmer the stew**

Return browned beef to the pot and add enough hot water to barely cover the meat, about 3-4 cups. Add 1 teaspoon salt, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low.

7 Cover and simmer gently for 45-50 minutes, stirring occasionally, until beef is fork-tender and liquid has reduced to a thick sauce. Season with additional salt to taste before serving.

Tips

Cut the beef into uniform 2-inch chunks to ensure even cooking throughout the stew.

Don't skip browning the onions until their water evaporates - this concentrates their sweetness and prevents a watery stew.

Use tomato paste rather than sauce for deeper, more concentrated flavor that won't thin out the stew.

Keep the lid slightly ajar during the last 15 minutes of cooking to allow excess moisture to evaporate if the stew seems too thin.

Taste and adjust salt only near the end of cooking, as the flavors concentrate during the long simmering process.

For even richer flavor, brown the meat in batches to avoid overcrowding and ensure proper caramelization.

Let the stew rest for 10 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to settle and the sauce to thicken slightly.