

James Beard Braised Beef

Ingredients:

- 5-pound boneless chuck roast
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh or dried thyme, or a combination of thyme, rosemary, and/or summer savory
- 1 bay leaf
- Pinch cinnamon
- 2 onions, stuck with 2 cloves each
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and left whole
- 2 sprigs parsley
- 1 leek
- 2 cups red wine, beef stock, beer, or water



Instructions:

1. In a braising pan or large heavy enameled cast iron casserole, brown the roast on all sides in the oil until the outside is slightly charred and richly colored. Remove all but 2 tablespoons of the remaining fat.
2. Salt and pepper the meat to taste, and sprinkle with an herb. Thyme is a favorite because it has a pungency that is most effective with beef, but you could use rosemary or summer savory, which would give an entirely different quality. Add the bay leaf, cinnamon, onions, garlic, parsley, and leek. Pour in the liquid of your choice and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover the pot, and either simmer on top of the stove over very low heat, allowing 30 to 35 minutes per pound, or cook in a 325°F oven, allowing 35 minutes a pound, about 3 hours, until the meat is quite tender. Add more liquid if needed.
3. Remove the meat to a hot platter to rest for about 15 minutes and skim the fat from the pan juices. If you want more gravy, strain the liquid, pour additional wine or beef stock into the pan and bring to a boil. Thicken the juices with little balls of butter and flour, kneaded together. Let it reduce until it lightly coats a spoon.