

Japanese Beef Stew

So I recently cooked a Japanese pork belly and udon noodle broth (recipe will be coming soon) that I really wanted to use pickled Daikon (Japanese radish) in, to add a little sharp freshness. The problem was, the only Daikon I could find was absolutely monstrous and I literally needed about 1/4 of what I bought. Lucky for me it keeps really well so I set about researching how I could use the rest and came up with a hearty, Japanese inspired, slow cooked, beef stew. This is classic East meets West as all of the recipes I looked at appeared a little watery to me and I really fancied a good old fashioned beef stew with a thick, fragrant gravy that could be mopped up with jasmine rice. I was so happy with the result, the Daikon was the perfect vegetable in the stew (along with carrot) as it really held together and added a sweet element once cooked. If you can't get daikon then you could use ordinary radish and it would be just as delicious. They really are beautiful cooked and not something I have ever really thought of doing before but I loathe waste so this seemed like the perfect alternative. It didn't disappoint!

I cooked this low and slow on the stove top (the house smelled amazing) but it could be done in the slow cooker. I wouldn't add the daikon and carrot though until about an hour or two before serving as I think it would disintegrate if it was cooked for 6 hours. To use the slow cooker, brown the meat first before adding the sauce and cook on low for 6 hours or until the meat is falling apart.

Prep time: 30 Minutes

Cooking time: 3.5 hours

\$\$ Medium Budget

Serves 6

Oil for frying

1 kg of gravy beef cut into decent sized chunks, about 2.5cm

2 tbs of plain flour

2 cloves of garlic, minced

3cm piece of ginger, finely minced

1 red chilli, finely chopped

1 large brown onion, halved and sliced top to bottom

18 dried shiitake mushrooms, about 3 per person, soaked in one cup of boiling water for 10 minutes (reserve the water for the stew)

1/3 cup of soy sauce

1/2 cup of cooking sake

2/3 cup of mirin

1 lemon, rind peeled and juiced

1 cup of chicken stock

Cracked pepper

2 carrots, peeled, halved lengthways and sliced diagonally

1 Daikon radish, peeled, halved lengthways and sliced diagonally

2 Spring onions, sliced diagonally and placed in iced water, for garnish

Baby Shiso Leaves or other micro herbs (totally optional but they look so pretty)

2 Tbs of Furikake seasoning*

Steamed jasmine rice to serve

To prepare the beef Stew, heat a large heavy based pot or pan with a lid and add a little oil.

Place the flour on a baking tray and season with a little salt and pepper before tossing the beef through the flour until it is all nice and thinly coated. Shake off any excess flour before adding the beef to the pan, cooking in batches until golden. Remove from the pan and set aside.

In the same pan (don't worry about the crunchy bits) fry the onion until translucent before adding the finely chopped garlic, ginger and chilli. I use a little turbo chef chopper to get mine nice and fine or you could use a small food processor if you can't be bothered with the knife. Cook the aromatics for a couple of minutes before adding the sake, soy and mirin. Use a wooden spoon to scrape the bottom of the pan before adding the lemon rind,

lemon juice, stock and the water from the shiitake mushrooms. Add the beef back to the pan, juices and all and give a really good stir to combine. Tear off a piece of baking paper and lay it over the stew before placing the lid on. This is called a cartouche and it helps to keep all of the moisture in the stew. Reduce the heat to a nice low simmer and cook the stew for about 2 hours, stirring periodically.

After 2 hours, remove the lid and add the carrot and daikon, stirring to combine. Pop the lid back on and cook for a further 45 minutes until the veggies are tender and the meat is succulent and juicy. Remove the lid for the last 15 minutes and allow to reduce a little before serving.

To serve the stew, divide rice between serving plates, using a small ramekin to give you a nice neat mound. Spoon the stew and juices around the rice and top with the chilled spring onion, it should be nice and curly. Sprinkle over a small amount of Furikake seasoning and scatter over the micro herbs if you are using them. Serve with a side of steamed greens of your choice.