

Meatball and pearl barley stew

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 carrots, diced
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 1 litre/1¾ pints beef stock (made with a stock cube)
- ½ tsp dried mixed herbs
- 175g/6oz pearl barley, well rinsed
- salt and black pepper

For the meatballs

- 400g/14oz beef mince
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- ½ tsp dried mixed herbs
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Preparation method

1. Heat a large saucepan or casserole dish over a medium heat. Add the olive oil to the pan along with the onion, carrots and a pinch of salt. Fry for 5-6 minutes, or until the onions are softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook for a further 1-2 minutes, or until aromatic.
2. Pour in 750ml/1¼ pint of the stock and add the dried herbs and pearl barley. Bring to just below boiling point and then reduce the heat until very gently simmering. Cook for 30 minutes.
3. For the meatballs, mix together the mince, onion, garlic and herbs along with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Using your hands, roll into 16 balls.
4. Heat a frying pan over a medium heat and add one tablespoon of olive oil. Once hot, fry the meatballs on all sides until nicely coloured, being careful not to burn them. You may need to do this in batches.
5. Transfer the coloured meatballs to the pan with the barley and gently mix through. Put the frying pan over a medium heat and pour 100ml/3½ fl oz of water into the pan. Use a wooden spoon to scrape the bottom and catch all the flavours from frying the meatballs then pour this liquid into the pan with the barley.
6. Add the remaining stock to the barley pan, cover and cook for a further 10 minutes, or until the meatballs are cooked through. Serve warm.

less than 30 mins

preparation time

30 mins to 1 hour

cooking time

Serves 4

By The Hairy Bikers
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Pearl barley is a grain that's often overlooked, but in this meatball stew it gives texture and bulks out the quantities to bring down costs.

If you are making this stew in advance add a little more stock or water when you reheat it, as the pearl barley will have soaked up some of the sauce

Top recipe tip

In May 2013 this recipe was costed at £3.32 at Asda, £3.95 at Tesco and £2.66 at Sainsbury's.