

Gochujang Beef Stew with Roasted Tomatoes and Creamy Polenta — SCRAPS by Carolina Gelen

BEEF STEW

- 1 pound (450 to 500 g) 80/20 ground beef
- A whole head of garlic, cut in half, crosswise
- 2 dollops (about 4 tablespoons) gochujang, plus more to taste
- A splash of (about 1/4 cup) red wine, vegetable stock or water
- 2 to 3 pounds (1 to 1.3 kg) cherry tomatoes
- 3/4 to 1 cup vegetable stock, beef stock or water
- A small handful fresh parsley, chopped, plus more for serving
- Kosher salt and pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil

POLENTA

- 1 cup polenta
- 2 to 2 1/2 cups vegetable stock or water
- 1 x 14 oz can full-fat coconut milk
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil

Step 1

Heat the oven to 425°F (215°C).

Step 2

In a medium, ovenproof pan or Dutch-oven over medium heat, heat 3 to 4 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the beef and sear for 3 to 5 minutes, occasionally stirring, until you see crusty brown bits on the bottom of the pan or until the beef gets a rich brown color. Season with a big pinch of salt and freshly cracked black pepper.

Step 3

Add the garlic to the pan, cut side down, and sear. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Stir in the gochujang until all beef is coated. Add a splash of wine, stock, or water, and deglaze the pan by scraping off all those delicious and flavorful brown bits at the bottom.

Step 4

Add the cherry tomatoes on top, and don't stir. Allow them to sit on top of the beef. Drizzle a couple more tablespoons of olive oil on top, and season with salt. Place in the oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the cherry tomatoes are slightly charred on top, have their flesh exposed and are visibly softened.

Step 5

Carefully remove the pan out the oven. Crush half of the cherry tomatoes and leave the remaining half whole. If you're not a fan of tomato peels, they're very easy to remove by hand. Simply pick them up and discard or compost. Squeeze out the garlic cloves (careful, it's really hot, you can use a pair of tongues to squeeze out the cloves) and crush them against the sides of the pot with the back of a spoon or spatula.

Step 6

Mix the vegetable stock, beef stock or water until the stew reaches the desired consistency and set aside. I ended up using about 1 cup of stock. Add the parsley and stir to incorporate. Taste, and season more as needed.

Step 7

To make the polenta, in a separate pot over medium heat, add a drizzle of olive oil. Add the polenta and toss in the oil for 3 to 5 minutes until fragrant and toasty. Carefully pour the vegetable stock or water in the pot (stay away from the pan, the stock will immediately start bubbling). Add the coconut milk, a big pinch of salt, black pepper and whisk to combine.

Bring to a simmer, reduce the heat to medium low and continue stirring using a whisk to prevent any clumps from forming. This will take 20 to 30 minutes. To check if your polenta is ready, taste it: if it still feels grainy, it needs more time, if it has a porridge-like consistency that melts in your mouth, it's ready.

Serve the polenta and stew right away with fresh parsley on top.