

# January Thaw

Hearty stew served with warm, buttered quick breads is the gastronomic equivalent of woolly mittens *Photographs by Martin Vecchio Styling by Aleene Jinn George*

“Food is not about impressing people. It’s about making them feel comfortable.” — *Ina Garten, The Barefoot Contessa cookbook*

## BEEF STEW

1/2 cup olive oil, divided\*  
 4 tablespoons butter, divided\*  
 1 pound baby button mushrooms, halved  
 1 white onion, chopped  
 6 cloves garlic, minced  
 1/3 cup all-purpose flour  
 2 pounds lean beef stew meat, cut into bite-size pieces  
 1 cup red wine

1/2 cup balsamic vinegar  
 2-1/2 cups beef broth  
 1 teaspoon thyme  
 3 bay leaves  
 Sprinkling of cinnamon  
 Sprinkling of allspice  
 6 potatoes peeled and chopped  
 3 carrots peeled and chopped  
 Salt and pepper

**HEAT** \*1/4 cup olive oil and \*2 table-  
 spoons butter in a large Dutch oven over  
 medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and  
 sauté 5 minutes or 'til mushrooms begin to  
 brown. Spoon mushrooms into a large  
 bowl. Add onion to pan and sauté 10  
 minutes or until tender and golden brown.  
 Add garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add  
 onion-garlic mixture to bowl with mush-  
 rooms.

**PLACE** flour in a shallow bowl or pie  
 plate. Dredge beef in flour, shaking off  
 excess. Heat remaining oil and butter in  
 pan over medium-high heat. Add half the  
 floured beef; sprinkle with salt and pepper.  
 Cook 6 minutes, browning on all sides. Add  
 browned beef to mushroom mixture in

bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining  
 beef, sprinkling again with salt and pepper.  
 Remove again and set aside.

**ADD** wine and vinegar to the Dutch  
 oven, scraping pan to loosen browned bits.  
 Add broth, thyme, bay leaves, cinnamon,  
 and allspice, and bring to boil. Stir in beef  
 mixture (mushrooms, onion, garlic, and  
 beef). Cover, reduce heat to medium-low,  
 and simmer 1 hour.

**STIR** in potato and carrot. Simmer,  
 uncovered, 75 minutes or until vegetables  
 are tender and sauce is thick, stirring  
 occasionally. Season to taste with salt and  
 pepper. Discard bay leaves.

— *Adapted from Tyler Florence and  
 Cooking Light*

**Muffin basket, sieve, peeler, and white pan,** all from Oddfellows Antiques, Berkley; 248-399-6098. **Soup bowl,** at area Crate & Barrel stores; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com).



### CHEDDAR & CHIVE BISCUITS

- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter, cold and cut into squares
- 1 cup shredded cheddar
- 1/4 cup fresh chives, diced

**PREHEAT** the oven to 400. Line a baking sheet with parchment or spray lightly with cooking spray.

**WHISK** egg and milk together in a small bowl. Set aside.

**WHISK** together dry ingredients: flour, baking powder, salt, and cream of tartar. Cut the cold butter into the dry ingredients using two forks or a pastry blender until there are no pieces bigger than a pea. Stir in the cheese and chives.

**POUR** milk mixture over flour mixture and stir gently with a wooden spoon. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead a bit until dough comes together.

**PAT** into a 1-inch high dough round and cut with a biscuit cutter, placing biscuits on prepared baking sheet. Bake 12-15 minutes or until the tops are golden.

“Hot and flaky, fresh from the oven, homemade biscuits can easily be the bright spot of a winter day.”  
— Rob Kasper, *The Baltimore Sun*

### HONEY BUTTER

- 4 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Pinch of cinnamon

Using an electric mixer, beat ingredients together until blended. Serve on cornbread.

### SWEET POTATO CORN BREAD

- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sweet-potato purée
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon molasses

**PREHEAT** oven to 400 and grease an 8-inch baking dish. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, spices, brown sugar, and cornmeal. In a small bowl, lightly beat the eggs and then stir in the sweet-potato purée, oil, and molasses. Stir wet ingredients into the dry just 'til combined. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing out the top as much as possible. Bake 30 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

— Adapted from [sugarcrafter.net](http://sugarcrafter.net).

**Muffin bowl**, from Oddfellows Antiques, Berkley; 248-399-6098. **Mini cast-iron skillet and square plate**, at area Crate & Barrel stores; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com). **Red serving platter and butter knife**, at area Sur La Table stores; [surlatable.com](http://surlatable.com). **Ingredients courtesy of Westborn Market**; [westbornmarket.com](http://westbornmarket.com).