



The Best Soups & Stews (Best Recipe)

By Cook's Illustrated Magazine Editors

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What's the secret to great chicken stock? Which cut of meat makes the best beef stew? What's the best way to thicken New England clam chowder? Do you really need to soak black beans before making soup?

In an exhaustive effort to answer these and many more questions, the test kitchen simmered more than 6,000 pots of soup and stew. The result is this definitive collection of more than 200 recipes covering just about every soup and stew imaginable. Choose from perennial favorites such as Manhattan clam chowder, cream of tomato soup, Cincinnati chili, and beef barley soup or international recipes such as hot-and-sour soup, borscht, and miso soup.

The Best Soups and Stews also contains 200 illustrations that show you how to cut up a chicken, defat stock, shape matzo balls, mince ginger, and much more. No-nonsense equipment ratings and taste tests of supermarket ingredients are also included. Find out which supermarket chicken broth received our highest rating, which blender turns out the smoothest pureed soups, and which pot is best for making stews. With this book at your side, we guarantee that you will never turn out a bland pot of soup or a greasy stew with tough stringy meat—in fact, cooking favorite and new recipes will be easy and foolproof.

What separates great corn chowder from the pack?

For deep corn flavor, grate ears of corn to create a thick pulp bursting with fresh corn flavor, then add whole kernels at the last minute. And for richness and smoky flavor, sauté salt pork and leave it in the chowder as it simmers.

What is the secret to rich-tasting beef stew?

First, use beef chuck and cut your own stew meat (for consistency of texture and flavor); then skip the flouring step—floured meat gives stew a weak, less beefy flavor. And for the perfect texture overall, cook the stew in the oven after browning the meat and add the vegetables in stages.

How do you make the ultimate French Onion soup?

The best French onion soup starts with caramelized red onions (they have the most intense sweetness and complexity of flavor) and two types of

broth—chicken and beef broth. And for the perfect cheesy crust, use Asiago for flavor and Swiss for meltability.

How do you make great chicken cacciatore?

Start with skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs for the deepest flavor, then discard the skin after the initial sauté to prevent the stew from becoming greasy. Add portobellos for earthy flavor and build a robust sauce with red wine and a Parmesan rind.

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