COOKING PASSION SINCE 1877



Why slow cooked beef is back

From curries to casseroles, ragu to the classic stroganoff – nothing warms those winter bones like a bowl of slow cooked beef!

Slow cooking is back in fashion in a big way and why wouldn't it be?! It's simple, flavoursome and gets the best out of any cut of meat for a delicious crowd-pleasing meal, every time.

You really can't go wrong with these simple tips on how to create a slow cooked meal this winter:

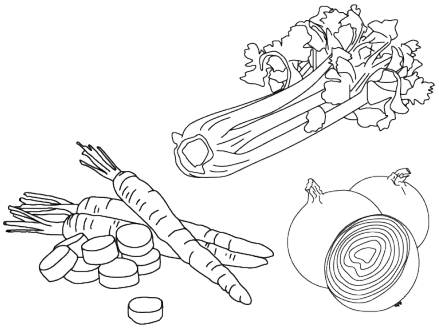
What beef should you use?

One of the key advantages to slow cooking is that it turns less expensive, secondary cuts of beef into a 5 star meal. Slow cooking ensures that every part of the meat has time to break down and soften, making usually tough or chewy cuts so tender that they 'fall of the bone'!

With this in mind, ask your butcher for something less popular such as chuck, shin, topside or blade. You can choose 'bone in' or 'bone out' depending on your preference. Bone in will add some extra flavour thanks to the addition of marrow, while bone out will make serving the dish just a little easier. If you're going to cook bone out, cut the pieces into 3cm cube before cooking to make it even easier!

How do you add flavour?

When it comes to preparing your dish, there are some key ingredients that will add flavour to your dish. Here is a short list of ingredients we always keep on hand at The NEFF Kitchen:



Vegetable base:
Almost every slow cooked dish begins with a classic combination of vegetables cooked on a slow simmer to add sweetness and flavour. Try a classic French mirepoix (pronounced meer-pwah) by mixing onion, carrots and celery, a German Suppengrün using carrot, celeriac and leek or the Holy Trinity of Cajun cooking using onion, celery and green bell peppers.



Tomatoes:
You can use fresh tomatoes, but canned or diced tomatoes work just as well for a slow cooked meal. Tomato purée can also be used to add a deeper flavour to your meal or passata for a smooth consistent texture.



Stock:
Stock is an essential component of any slow cooked meal! It provides a liquid base for stewing your meat and also adds richness and a delicious umami flavour to your dish. Remember that good quality liquid stock equals good flavour without being overly salty. Or better still, make your own!



Sauces:
Don't be shy! Sauces like soy, Worcestershire, mustard and horseradish are great to add an instant flavour boost and keep in your cupboard or fridge for months!

Spices:



The secret to any great kitchen is a well stocked spice cupboard! Ground cumin, coriander, paprika, caraway, fennel seed and a good quality curry powder should always be on hand. Add them to your pot after cooking the vegetable base to infuse the flavours as it cooks.



Herbs:
Herbs help build up the flavour. Bay leaves, fresh rosemary and fresh thyme work best for many slow cooked beef recipes and can be added during cooking or as a garnish for your meal.

What are the best slow-cooking techniques?

Slow cooking requires that you gently cook the meal over a low heat for several hours. As a general rule, the lower the heat, the longer the cook. Our two recommendations to achieve the best results are by using a NEFF oven or a NEFF induction cooktop.

In the oven:
When using the oven, take out an oven proof pot and place onto your stove. Then heat up some oil (coconut or olive depending of what flavour you're after) and sear your meat on all sides. Now add your choice of flavours starting with a vegetable base followed by spices, sauces and herbs. Once mixed, remove from the heat and cover with liquids (passata, stock, wine, water, coconut milk – whatever you wish!). Now cover the pot with a well fitted lid and place into the oven for 6 to 8 hours at approx. 100 °C. Refer to your recipe for the ideal time and temperature required to cook your dish.

On an induction cooktop:
Unlike gas cooktops which use an open flame, induction allows you to cook over a low-medium heat for long periods of time safely and consistently. If using your induction cooktop, use the same method as above to prepare your meal. Then once all your ingredients have been added to the pot, reduce your induction hob to a low-medium heat, cover with a well fitted lid and leave it to simmer for 6-8 hours on your cooktop. Again, refer to your recipe for the ideal time and temperature required to cook your dish.

Slow cooked meals are also great if you're short on time to prepare a meal during the week. Simply cook your meal over the weekend and once cooled, pack into small serving containers which can be re-heated when desired or even frozen, ready for a rainy day! With winter upon us, give slow cooked beef a go – we promise you won't regret it!

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