

Beef joins veggies for a skillet dinner



Meatballs are always a family favorite as are skillet dinners. So when you put both together, you know you've got a winner.

Large ground-beef balls, flavored with onion and sage, are first shaped and browned. Then, in the same frying pan, a medley of vegetables including potatoes, carrots, celery and cabbage are braised to tenderness. To complete the preparation, the meatballs join the vegetables for a final brief cooking. The result is an all-in-one main course that's easy to make, delicious to eat and quick to clean up after.

When selecting the meat for this entrée, let the label be your shopping guide. Packages marked "ground beef" must contain pure beef, ground only from beef muscles attached to the skeleton with no variety meats, other meats or ingredients added. You'll want to note the percentage of lean listed on the label. This is the lean-to-fat ratio, and the lean content may vary from 70 to 80 percent or more. The percentage of lean you select is a matter of price and personal preference. In general, the lower the percent of lean, the more economical the ground beef. Most ground-beef dishes such as this meatball dish can be satisfactorily made with ground beef that falls between 70 to 80 percent lean.

Like all red meat, ground beef is an excellent source of high-quality protein, containing all the essential amino acids that the body cannot produce and must receive from food every day. The important B vitamins found in meat are riboflavin, thiamin, niacin, B-6 and

B-12. Beef is also a leading source of iron and zinc.

MEATBALL SKILLET DINNER

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. sage
- 1 medium onion, cut into 8 wedges
- 1/2 cup soft bread crumbs
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. cooking fat
- 1/2 cup water
- 4 small potatoes, halved
- 2 large carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 cup 3/4-inch pieces celery
- 1 small cabbage, cut into 4 wedges
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Sprinkle 1 teaspoon salt and sage over ground beef. Finely chop 1 wedge of onion, add onion, bread crumbs and egg to beef, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Shape into 8 balls and brown slowly in cooking fat in large frying-pan; remove. Add water, potatoes, carrots, celery and remaining onion wedges to frying-pan. Cover tightly and cook slowly for 15 minutes. Add cabbage wedges. Sprinkle vegetables with 1/2 teaspoon salt, paprika and pepper; cover and continue cooking 15 minutes or until cabbage is tender. Remove cabbage to warm platter. Return meat balls to pan and cook, covered, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve 4.

With beef, potatoes and vegetables all in the main dish, the menu can easily be completed with a crisp green salad and biscuits. For dessert, serve wedges of fresh pear and apple with a plate of homemade oatmeal cookies.

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Oysters make fine stuffing for meats

Don't let oysters scare you! Even if you don't like them raw, their texture becomes quite different upon cooking.

Oysters can be used to stuff steak, as in the classic Carpetbagger recipe, and they can be especially delicious in a bread stuffing for a holiday turkey or capon. This stuffing uses whole wheat bread for fuller flavor and is scented with thyme. The herbs may be varied to suit your taste.

OYSTER BREAD STUFFING

- 1 pint shucked oysters
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- Several dashes hot red pepper sauce
- 1/4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 3/4 tsp. dried thyme leaves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste (about 1/4 tsp. each)
- 5 Tbsp. butter or margarine
- 2 ribs celery with leaves, chopped (2 cups)
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped (1 cup)
- 6 cups whole wheat bread cubes (7-8 slices day-old bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes)

1. Place oysters in medium bowl. Combine lemon juice with hot pepper sauce and remaining seasonings. Stir gently into oysters. Let marinate while preparing rest of recipe.

2. In large skillet, heat half the butter until hot. Sauté celery and onion over medium heat until crisp-tender, about 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to large bowl. Melt remaining butter; sauté bread cubes until gold on all sides, about 8 minutes. Stir bread cubes and oysters in celery-onion mixture, tossing gently to thoroughly combine.

3. Place in buttered 1-quart glass casserole. Bake in 350-degree oven 20 to 25 minutes, or until top is browned. If using a metal baking pan, increase oven temperature 25 degrees and bake 5 minutes less. Makes about 1 quart. Or stuff a 5-pound capon or a 6-pound fish with the mixture. Double recipe for a 10-pound turkey.

TIPS: Fresh or frozen oysters are preferred for this recipe, because their liquor (juice) is used.

Stuffing will be more moist when cooked in a bird or fish. Prepared in a casserole, it is crispier; casserole may be covered the last half of baking for a more moist stuffing.

VARIATIONS: Delicious with grilled chicken or turkey. Herbs may be varied; thyme and sage or marjoram are good combinations. For a spicier stuffing, add more hot pepper sauce.

Shopping Spree Sweepstakes

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