

Irish Stew with Piccalilli

This isn't a dish we would get often at home, which was too bad because we all loved it, especially with piccalilli, a mustard pickle of cauliflower, onions, and other vegetables. A lot of places in the States serve what they call Irish stew, but it's made with beef. Real Irish stew is not made with beef. At all. Traditionally it is made with lamb neck or shinbones (known as gigot), but I use shoulder chops because they are meatier and you can get a good sear on them, which adds flavor. Irish stew would not really include carrots, by the way, but I add them for sweetness.

⌘ { SERVES 4 } ⌘

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 (8-ounce) lamb shoulder chops

2 tablespoons canola oil

2 yellow onions, quartered lengthwise

2 carrots, peeled and cut crosswise into 2-inch pieces

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 large fresh bay leaf

2 russet potatoes, peeled and quartered

3 cups water

3 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme

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Brown the chops: Sprinkle salt and pepper liberally over both sides of the lamb chops. In a flameproof casserole over medium-high heat, heat the oil until it shimmers. Brown both sides of the lamb chops well (2 to 3 minutes per side), working in 2 batches so the pot is not crowded. Transfer the browned lamb to a plate and set aside.

Cook the stew: Blot the oil from the pot with a wad of paper towels. Add the onions, carrots, garlic, and bay leaf. Top the vegetables with the chops and

any collected juices on their plate. Add the potatoes and water. Bring the liquid to a boil. Lower the heat to medium, cover the pot, and let the chops simmer for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, until the meat is very tender. Adjust the salt and pepper seasoning to taste. Stir in the chopped thyme and serve immediately, with piccalilli on the side. The stew can be made the day before and gently reheated on the stove or in the oven at 300°F for 30 minutes. (See About Stews, page 73.)