

Beef Stifatho

There are some nice surprises in this Greek beef stew. The vinegar gives it a pleasant acid taste, the cinnamon and cumin a quite domesticated exotic savor, and the feta, added just at the end so it all but melts, is smooth and creamy.

	6	12	20	50
beef chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes	2 lbs	4 lbs	7 lbs	16 lbs
olive oil	2 tbs	¼ c	½ c	¾ c
large onions, chopped	1	2	5	12
bay leaves	1	2	4	6
dried oregano	pinch	½ tsp	1 tsp	1 tbs
ground cinnamon	½ tsp	1 tsp	2 tsp	2 tbs
ground cumin	½ tsp	1 tsp	2 tsp	1½ tbs
		(or to taste)		
salt		(season to taste)		
freshly ground black pepper		(season to taste)		
dry, white wine	½ c	1 c	2 c	2 qts
35-ounce cans tomato sauce	1	2	5	10
35-ounce cans Italian tomatoes	1	2	5	10
red wine vinegar	2 tbs	¼ c	½ c	1½ c
small pearl onions, peeled	12	24	40	100
feta cheese, cubed	¼ lb	½ lb	1½ lbs	3 lbs

In a heavy skillet, brown the meat in the olive oil. Add the chopped onion and stir until it is browned, then add the herbs, spices, salt, pepper, and wine and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the tomato sauce, tomatoes, and vinegar and simmer, covered, until the meat is almost tender, about 30 minutes. If more liquid is needed, add water. If the Beef Stifatho is to be served at a later time, cool and store at this point.

When ready to serve, cook the small pearl onions in a large kettle of boiling water until almost tender. Heat the stew to bubbling, add the pearl onions, and simmer for 5 minutes, making sure the onions and the meat are tender, then add the feta cheese and simmer very slowly for 5 minutes longer, or until the cheese is hot but not really melted. Serve immediately.

