

**MARCH 2026**

# THYME



Each month from February to November, we'll offer a free "take-and-make" spice kit highlighting a different spice, herb, or blend. Each kit includes a small portion of the featured spice, enough for the suggested recipes on the back page. Kits will be available starting the first Monday of the month at the Adult Services desk at both Harnish and Eastgate branches. Supplies are limited. Please take one kit per household. After trying the recipes, we'd love to hear from you! Share your photos, tips, or feedback at [info@aapld.org](mailto:info@aapld.org).

**Thyme** (*Thymus vulgaris*) is a fragrant herb from the mint family, native to the Mediterranean region. It has small, aromatic leaves on woody stems and produces tiny purple or pink flowers. Thyme grows well in sunny, well-drained soil and is commonly grown in herb gardens. It has been used for thousands of years in cooking, traditional medicine, and cultural practices.

**Culinary Uses** Thyme is widely used in Mediterranean, French, and Italian cuisine. Its warm, earthy flavor pairs well with roasted vegetables, soups, stews, poultry, fish, and meat. It is often included in herb blends such as bouquet garni and Herbes de Provence. Thyme can be used fresh or dried and holds its flavor well during long cooking times. It is also commonly used to flavor marinades and salad dressings.

**Health Benefits** It contains antioxidants and compounds such as thymol, which has antibacterial properties. Thyme has traditionally been used in herbal remedies to support respiratory health and soothe coughs. Thyme also provides vitamins like vitamin C and vitamin A and may help support digestion.

**Cultural Facts** Thyme has a rich cultural history across many civilizations. In ancient Greece, it symbolized courage and was burned as incense in temples. Romans used thyme to purify rooms and flavor cheeses and liqueurs. During the Middle Ages, people believed thyme could bring strength and protection, and it was sometimes embroidered on scarves given to knights going into battle. In European folklore, thyme was also associated with fairies, and people believed fairies gathered around patches of wild thyme. Today, thyme continues to symbolize bravery, strength, and resilience in many traditions. 🌿

***ALLERGEN WARNING AAPLD is not responsible for any reactions or sensitivities to any spice. Please be aware that spices may contain or come into contact with common allergens like dairy, eggs, soybeans, tree nuts, peanuts, fish, shellfish, or wheat. Stay safe! Cook with caution.***





# IRISH BEEF STEW

## Ingredients

- 1 1/4 pounds well-marbled chuck beef stew meat, cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 3 teaspoons salt, or to taste
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 cups beef stock
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup Guinness extra stout
- 1 cup hearty red wine
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon thyme
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 pounds russet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 7 cups)
- 1 large onion, chopped (1 1/2 to 2 cups)
- 3 to 4 carrots or parsnips, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (2 cups)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

## Instructions

- Sprinkle about a teaspoon of salt over the beef pieces.
- Heat the olive oil in a large (6 to 8-quart), thick-bottomed pot over medium-high heat.
- Pat dry the beef with paper towels and working in batches, add the beef (do not crowd the pan, or the meat will steam and not brown) and cook, without stirring, until well browned on one side, then use tongs to turn the pieces over and brown on another side.
- Add garlic and add the other stock ingredients, then simmer.
- Add garlic to the pot with the beef and sauté 30 seconds or until fragrant. Add the beef stock, water, Guinness, red wine, tomato paste, sugar, thyme, Worcestershire sauce, and bay leaves. Stir to combine.
- Bring mixture to a simmer. Reduce heat to the lowest setting, then cover and cook at a bare simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
- While the pot of meat and stock is simmering, melt the butter in another pot over medium heat. Add the onions and carrots. Sauté them until golden, about 15 minutes. Set aside until the beef stew has simmered for one hour.
- Add the onions, carrots, and potatoes to the beef stew. Add black pepper and two teaspoons of salt. Simmer uncovered until vegetables and beef are very tender, about 40 minutes. Discard the bay leaves. Tilt pan and spoon off any excess fat.
- Transfer stew to serving bowls. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.