Hearty Beef & Pumpkin Stew

Ingredients: ***Serves: 6***

- 900g stewing beef (chuck or braising steak), cut into 4cm cubes
- 3 tbsp olive oil (divided)
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 2 sticks celery, chopped
- 3 cups (about 400g) pumpkin, peeled and cut into 2–3cm cubes (sugar pumpkin or kabocha work best)
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 250ml red wine (optional – or replace with extra stock)
- 1 litre beef stock
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped (to serve)

Method:

Brown the beef:

1. Pat the beef dry and season well with salt and pepper.
2. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large casserole dish over a medium–high heat.
3. Brown the beef in batches until nicely coloured, then set aside.

Cook the base vegetables:

4. Add the remaining oil, onion, carrots and celery to the pan. Cook for 5–6 minutes until softened.
5. Stir in the garlic and tomato purée, cooking for a further minute.

Deglaze the pan:

6. Pour in the red wine, scraping up any browned bits from the base of the dish. Simmer for 2–3 minutes.

Build the stew:

7. Return the beef to the pan. Add the beef stock, paprika, cumin, thyme, bay leaves, potatoes and pumpkin.
8. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to low. Cover and leave to simmer gently for 1½–2 hours, stirring occasionally, until the beef is tender.

Finish and serve:

9. Remove the bay leaves. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
10. Scatter with fresh parsley before serving.

To serve

With plenty of crusty bread for mopping up.

Ladled over buttery mash or steamed rice for a heartier meal.

A sprinkle of grated cheddar or parmesan on top works well if you fancy it.