

## Vickie's Just a Little Bit Cajun Beef Stew

1	lb	boneless beef stew meat
½	lb	medium size raw shrimp, cleaned and de-veined (optional)
½	lb	Eckrich smoked kielbasa link sausage (1/2" slices) (optional)
1	jar	Spicy Hot V8 tomato juice (16 oz or 3-5.5 oz cans)
1	can	diced stewed tomatoes (14 oz)
1	can	sliced carrots (14 oz)
1	can	sliced potatoes (14 oz)
1	can	beef broth (14 oz)
1-2	cup	frozen, sliced okra (plain, not breaded)
1	ea	large yellow onion (chopped)
2	ea	celery stalks (chopped)
1	jar	deli style mini corn on cob
1	TBSP	minced garlic
1	cup	shortening
½	cup	flour (enough to coat beef)
1	bottle	Louisiana Hot Sauce (to taste)
1	TBSP	sugar
1-2	TBSP	Worcestershire sauce
	Dash	garlic powder, salt, pepper

If time permits, marinate beef for about an hour in a generous portion of Louisiana hot sauce. Drain (throw the sauce out). Salt and pepper stew meat. Sprinkle with garlic powder. Place in bag with flour and shake to coat pieces well. In a large stock pot, brown meat in shortening on all sides. Add onions, celery and garlic. Cook onions until slightly transparent. Add beef broth and water to cover beef. Simmer meat approx 1 hour adding more water or broth when necessary. Add tomato juice, sugar and several ka-glunks (as Justin Wilson would say) of Louisiana hot sauce and Worcestershire to taste. Simmer on medium heat for about two hours or until meat is tender (add more tomato juice if necessary to maintain level). Add sausage (optional), canned vegetables and corn with juices if there's room in the stock pot (otherwise drain). Once the mixture has returned to a simmer, add tomatoes and okra. If juice is too thin, thicken by adding instant potato flakes or flour and water or cornstarch and water. Bring mixture back to a simmer. When vegetables are tender and broth has reached desired consistency - add shrimp. Cook 2-3 minutes or until shrimp meat is white and pink.

Notes: Serve it up with cornbread or rice or both! This recipe is a derivative of Inez's Classic Beef Stew. I've added and subtracted many ingredients in the past to suit myself. I probably have not made it the same way twice. The sugar helps cut the acidity of the tomatoes. A handful of rice added near the end helps soak up the oils from the sausage and acts as a thickening agent. Add a teaspoon of cayenne, Cajun seasoning or some chopped, pickled jalapeno for a little more zest. Use 2 cans standard Ro-tel tomatoes instead of diced tomatoes. Marinate beef in jalapeno juice or beer. Add cocktail onions. Add sliced corn on the cob or frozen corn instead of deli corn. The point being the sky (and the size of your pan) is the limit here. Good Luck and enjoy!

