

BRAISED BEEF

SERVES 6

1.4 kg (3 lb) piece of silverside
2 carrots, peeled
2 parsnips, peeled
3 celery sticks
2 small turnips, peeled
2 medium onions, skinned
30 ml (2 tbsp) vegetable oil or dripping
75 g (3 oz) streaky bacon rashers, rinded
1 bay leaf
Salt and freshly ground pepper
300 ml (½ pint) beef stock
300 ml (½ pint) cider
15 g (1/2 oz) butter
15 ml (1 level tbsp) plain flour
Chopped fresh parsley, to garnish (optional)

Tie up the meat to form a neat joint. Cut the carrots and parsnips into slices about 1 cm (½ inch) thick, halving them if large. Cut the celery and turnips into similar-sized pieces. Cut the onions in half and slice thickly.

1. Heat the oil in a deep 3.4 litre (6 pint) flameproof casserole. Chop the bacon, add to the pan and fry until beginning to brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and reserve.
2. Reheat the oil in the casserole for a few seconds. Add the meat and fry until browned all over, then remove from the casserole and set aside.
3. Add the vegetables to the casserole and fry over high heat. Return the bacon to the casserole, add the bay leaf and plenty of salt and pepper.
4. Place the joint in the centre of the bed of vegetables. Pour in the stock and cider and bring to the boil. Fit a piece of foil over the meat and vegetables to form a 'tent' then cover with a close-fitting lid.
5. Cook the joint in the oven 150°C Circotherm for about 2 hours. Halfway through the cooking time, turn the joint over and re-cover firmly. Test the meat after 2 hours; if it is done, a fine skewer will glide easily and smoothly into the joint.
6. Lift the joint on to a board and cut into slices no more than 0.5 cm (½ inch) thick. Remove the vegetables from the casserole with a slotted spoon and place on a shallow serving dish. Arrange the meat over the vegetables, cover with foil and place in a low oven.
7. Knead together the butter and flour. Skim off excess fat from the cooking juices, then stir in pieces of the butter and flour.
8. Place the casserole on top of the hob and bring to the boil, stirring. Boil rapidly until reduced and thickened, then taste and season. Spoon a little gravy over the meat and sprinkle with parsley, if wished. Serve remaining gravy separately in a sauceboat.