

## Italian-style Beef and Porcini Stew

<http://userealbutter.com/2013/02/17/italian-style-beef-porcini-stew-recipe/>  
from *Fine Cooking*

3 lbs. boneless beef chuck, cut into 1 1/2 to 2-inch pieces  
2 oz. thick cut bacon or pancetta, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (optional)  
1 tbsp grapeseed oil  
kosher salt to taste (about a teaspoon)  
fresh ground pepper  
1 medium yellow onion, coarsely chopped  
2 medium celery stalks, coarsely chopped (I'd increase this to 3)  
1 medium carrot, coarsely chopped (I'd increase this to 2)  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tbsp tomato paste (I really like Bionaturae which is organic, BPA-free)  
2 oz. dried porcini mushrooms, soaked in 2 1/2 cups of hot water until soft, then strained (save the liquid) and coarsely chopped  
1 tbsp fresh rosemary, minced  
1 dried bay leaf  
1 cup dry red wine (I'd double this)  
3 cups peeled pearl onions (I would prefer to replace this with a large yellow onion, coarsely chopped and cooked with the other onion)  
28 oz. chopped tomatoes (I would double this amount)  
1/4 cup fresh basil, chiffonade

Preheat the oven to 325°F and set the rack 1/3 of the way from the bottom of the oven. Pat the beef dry. In a Dutch oven, cook the pancetta over medium heat, stirring until it is browned, but not crisp. This will take about 6-8 minutes. Remove the pancetta to a paper towel to drain, but leave the grease in the pan. Season the beef with salt and pepper and mix to coat. Brown the beef in the pan over medium-high heat, turning the beef over to make sure it is brown on all sides (about 10 minutes total). Remove the beef to a bowl. Leave 2 tablespoons of fat in the pan. If you don't have enough fat, add grapeseed oil until you have about 2 tablespoons of fat in the pan.

Sauté the onions, carrots, and celery over medium heat with a pinch of salt and pepper until soft (about 5-6 minutes). Stir in the garlic, tomato paste, porcini mushrooms, rosemary, and bay leaf. Cook until fragrant (about 1-2 minutes), then add the pancetta and the red wine. Get a spatula on the bottom of the pan to dissolve any browned bits into the liquid (it's got all the flavor!). Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil. When the liquid has reduced by 50% (about 5-8 minutes), add the porcini mushroom liquid. Return the contents to a boil and add the beef and any juices from the beef. Lower the heat until the stew is simmering.

Crumple a piece of parchment paper that is as big as the Dutch oven. Flatten the paper and place it on the stew in the pan (you crumple it so it is easy to grab). Cover the pot with a tight fitting lid and place it in the oven for an hour. After an hour, if you are using

pearl onions, add those and then bake another 30 minutes, otherwise, let the stew go for another 30 minutes without adding pearl onions. After the 30 minutes, add the tomatoes and bake until the beef is fork tender (I'd give it at least another 90 minutes). Degrease the stew by setting some paper towels on the top to soak up the grease. Mine didn't have any grease, so I skipped that step. Stir in the basil. Serves 5-6.