**Pot-au-Feu**

[**James Beard**](https://www.jamesbeard.org/chef/james-beard)

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[Farmer’s note: This recipe calls for beef, but any meat appropriate for slow cooking will work just as well. Try it with Oakham Farm shoulder and ham roasts for a wonderfully satisfying meal. Make it on the weekend and you’ll have meals for the rest of the week.

This type of recipe is very forgiving, so you can follow it to the letter or use it as a jumping-off point for your own creativity, adding or subtracting vegetables and herbs as you wish.]

This classic French dish, translated as “pot on the fire,” is actually two dishes in one; it consists of a hearty beef broth as well as the meats and vegetables that are braised in it. Although the ingredients change slightly from home to home and province to province in France, the method remains the same. If you have meat left over, serve it the next day with some crisp home-fried potatoes.

**Ingredients**

**Broth:**

* 2 marrow bones
* 1 onion stuck with 2 cloves
* 1 leek
* 1 carrot
* 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme (or 1 teaspoon fresh)
* 1 sprig parsley with root (if possible)
* 1 whole head of garlic, papery outer skin removed
* Kosher salt to taste

**Pot-au-Feu:**

* 2 1/2 pounds brisket
* 3 pounds bottom round roast
* 2 1/2 to 3 pounds short ribs
* 1 onion stuck with 2 cloves
* 8 leeks, trimmed and cleaned
* 4 parsley sprigs
* 3 to 4 sprigs thyme (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)
* Pinch of tarragon, rosemary, and/or summer savory (optional)
* 8 small white onions, peeled
* 8 small turnips, peeled and quartered
* 12 to 14 medium-sized carrots, peeled and quartered
* 1 small Savoy cabbage, washed and cut in sixths
* 8 small new red or white potatoes, scrubbed
* Salt and pepper to taste

**Method**

Make the broth the day before you plan to serve the pot-au-feu.

To make the broth, place all the ingredients, including the papery outer skin you’ve removed from the head of garlic, into a large stockpot. Add water to cover and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and cook very slowly for 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Taste for salt, and add what you think it needs. Strain the broth, discarding the bones and vegetables, and chill overnight. Skim off the congealed fat.

To make the pot-au-feu, tie each piece of meat so it will keep its shape during cooking. Place the brisket, roast, and short ribs in a 12-quart stockpot and add the broth and onion. Slice off the green tops of the leeks, tie them in a bundle with the parsley, thyme, and whatever other herbs you choose, and add. (If you are using dried herbs, just add them directly to the broth.)

Bring the meat and broth to a boil, then skim off the scum and any little bits of fat that rise to the surface. Cover, reduce the heat, and simmer for about 2 hours.

Add the bottom parts of the leeks and cook for 15 minutes, then add the onions, turnips, and carrots, skimming the surface every time you add anything to the pot. In a separate saucepan, boil the potatoes in their jackets until soft. Drain and set aside.

When the vegetables are almost tender, in about 1/2 hour, test the meats by piercing them with a fork. They should break apart easily. If they are done, remove and keep warm. Add the cabbage to the pot and cook for 5 or 10 minutes more, until all the vegetables are tender. When they are completely cooked, but not mushy, remove them from the pot and place them on your serving platter. Season the broth with salt and freshly ground black pepper and skim off as much fat as possible.

Pour a good part of the broth into serving bowls along with thick slices of toasted French bread as your first course. a hunk of Parmesan cheese and a grater so everyone can grate cheese directly into his or her broth, a zesty addition. Reserve some of the remaining hot broth to serve with the meat.

Slice the meats and arrange them on a platter with the vegetables. Serve each person a cut of each kind of beef, some vegetables, and a potato. Ladle the hot broth over the meat and offer some spicy accompaniments, such as good mustard, coarse sea salt, grated fresh horseradish, and cornichons.

**Yield**

8 to 10 servings