

## Traditional Irish Food

Everyone will no doubt be familiar with the traditional Irish Stew but Ireland does have a few other traditional foods that are not so well known, these include Champ, Ulster Fry, Wheaten Bread, Soda Bread, and Potato Farls, Traditional Irish cooking is in the main basic, good and wholesome using prime quality local produce few spices are added to enhance the natural flavors of the basic ingredients with the exception of Salt and Pepper.

**Irish Stew.** Probably the "Best" known Irish dish Traditional made from goat or kid now however it is more commonly made with lamb;

**Method** Using 2lb of quality lamb neck bone the meat and trim the fat, then cut into fairly large pieces. Peel and slice a "Good" 2lb of potatoes. Similarly prepare about 8 medium onions( peel and slice) Next using a large oven proof dish place a layer of potato slices in the bottom of the dish then a layer of onions then add the lamb, season with Salt and Pepper add some chopped parsley and thyme followed by the remainder of the potatoes and onions layered. Add 1-1½ pints of water. Finished ! well not quite, cover the pot either with a lid or sheet of foil and cook in an oven at 250°F (Gas mark 4) for approx. 2 hours. Stir occasionally to prevent the stew from sticking and add more water if it becomes too dry. Irish stew is best prepared several hours or the day before as it often tastes better having been reheated. The stew when served should be accompanied with traditional Soda Bread. There is no definitive recipe for Irish stew and the above may be enhanced with the addition of carrots or parsnip another popular alternative is to substitute a quantity of the water with [Guinness](#).

**Ulster Fry.** Popular as its name suggests in the North of Ireland no visitor to Ireland should miss this traditional meal usually served as a breakfast but often eaten at any time of the day. The meal consists of the following Bacon, Sausages, Black Pudding, Mushrooms, Tomato and Eggs served with Soda Bread and Potato Farl.

**Method** Fry, Fry and Fry, or if you are health conscious you can grill but only if you insist!

The simplest of all dishes to cook requiring only a large frying pan and some cooking oil or beef dripping, Heat the oil or dripping but not so that it is over hot then simply Place the sausages, bacon, mushrooms and black pudding in the pan and cook (Fry) to taste. Once cooked remove and place on a plate in a warm oven. Now using the same pan and cooking oil fry a potato farl and a piece of soda bread (ensure they they do not soak up the fat by carefully tilting the pan and using a fish slice to gently squeeze out excess cooking oil) when browned (*Like Toast*) Place with the other items in the warm oven. Finally Crack a free range egg or two (depending on hunger level) into the frying pan and cook until the yoke is cooked but not hard remove and serve with the other ingredients. Believe me with a drop of red or brown sauce this is a truly remarkable dish.

**Champ** A simple tasty dish of mash potatoes and scallions (Spring Onions)

**Method** Peel and boil some potatoes according to the number of portions (allow about 1lb per person) New season potatoes are best but do not over boil the potatoes should be cook but not "watery" next take a bunch of scallions and chop into ½" lengths chop the white bulb as well these should be placed in a pot and just covered

with fresh milk (Do not use semi-skimmed) bring the milk to the boil and simmer for a minute or so then add to the potatoes mash the whole lot together with the addition of a knob of salted butter until the potatoes are smooth. Garnish with some freshly chopped parsley and serve immediately. Champ is an ideal accompaniment to bacon, grilled beef sausages, lamb chops etc.,

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