

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

A Sort-Of Scotch Broth

BY RACHEL
WALKER



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THIS IS ONLY A “SORT-OF” SCOTCH BROTH because it uses chicken rather than the traditional lamb or mutton, making it a cross between Highland fuel and Jewish penicillin. It’s cheap, nutritious and hugely comforting—the perfect January dish.

When imparting the secrets of a good Scotch broth, chef Simon Hopkins writes: “Any Scotch broth that looks too colourful (save for plenty of chopped parsley added at the end), too neatly and finely diced—or, heaven forbid, too thin—should be looked upon as an interloper.” The pearl barley will help thicken. Otherwise, aim for substance rather than beauty by cooking it nice and slowly to make something heartening for a cosy weekend night in.

Serves 4

- 20g butter
- 2 onions, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 2 leeks, sliced
- 250g carrots, diced
- 250g swede, diced
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 chicken legs or thighs
- 2 litres chicken stock
- 100g pearl barley
- 100g kale
- 4tbsps fresh, flat-leaf parsley
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- To serve: four bread rolls

1. Heat the butter in the bottom of a casserole pan and then add the onions, celery, leeks, carrots, swede and bay leaves.



Cook on a low heat for ten minutes, until the vegetables have softened.

2. Lay the chicken legs or thighs on top of the vegetables and cover with the chicken stock. Put on the lid and cook at a gentle simmer for ten minutes.
3. Add the pearl barley to the pan and bring back to a rolling simmer for 50 minutes.
4. Lift the chicken out of the pan and put it in a dish. Discard the skin and then use two forks to carefully shred the meat from the bone. Return the chicken meat to the pan, add the kale and simmer uncovered for two minutes. Season to taste.
5. Divide the broth between four heated dishes, making sure that you dig deep with the ladle to ensure that the pearl barley is divided equally. Top each portion with a tablespoon of fresh, flat-leaf parsley and serve with a bread roll.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM & ZOE HILL

TIPS...

For an exotic, Eastern twist, stir two tablespoons of ras el hanout in with the onions and celery. Leave out the root vegetables and switch pearl barley for freekeh, a nutty Middle Eastern grain that’s cooked in the same way.

Whisky Warmer

WITH LOTS OF LONG WINTER NIGHTS still ahead of us and Robbie Burns celebrations on the horizon (January 25), now's the perfect time of year to crack open a bottle of whisky and enjoy a wee dram. Real whisky enthusiasts might also consider joining the growing number of whisky tourists making a pilgrimage to Scotland.

Tickets go on sale this month for the 17th annual Speyside Whisky Festival (April 28–May 2), which has a programme of 400 events, from distillery tours to tutored tastings. The festival hones in on a small but beautiful part of north-east Scotland that's home to over 50 distilleries,



including The Glenlivet—the best-selling scotch in the world.

One of the highlights is a trip to The Whisky Shop in Dufftown where they run “bacon-buttie pairings”. The festival also sheds light on lots of other hidden gems, from the Victorian Gardens round the back of Glen Grant Distillery to the Speyside Cooperage, where you can see traditional cask-making in action.

■ **Visit spiritofspeyside.com for details and to book tickets**



RACHEL RECOMMENDS

■ **Strathisla 12-Year-Old**, The Whisky Exchange, £30.75 Aged in sherry casks for a fruity dram with sultana notes, cinnamon and allspice.

■ **Glenfiddich 15-Year-Old Solera**, The Whisky Exchange, £37.45 A mellow whisky, rich with sweet heather honey and vanilla fudge.

■ **The Glenlivet 15-Year-Old, Master of Malt**, £38.69 Aged in Limousin Oak, this is a smooth dram with vanilla-apple aromas.



pudding
of the
Month



Cranachan

- 350g frozen raspberries
- 50g porridge oats
- 300ml double cream
- 2tbsps natural yogurt
- 2tbsps runny honey
- 2tbsps whisky

1. Tip raspberries into a bowl and leave to defrost.
2. Heat the oven to 180C. Spread out the oats on baking parchment and toast in the oven until they start to smell nutty.
3. Whip the double cream to soft peaks and then use a dessert spoon to stir in the natural yogurt, runny honey, whisky and most of the oats—leaving two tablespoons of the oats behind.
4. Take four glasses and build layers of raspberries and cream, finishing with a layer of cream. Garnish with raspberries and oats. ■

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BOOK



First Bite: How We Learned to Eat by Bee Wilson (*Fourth Estate*). A smart tome dedicated to common-sense eating.

BUDGET



Polar Gear Lunch Pod, Asda, £5. Embark upon a year of healthy work lunches with this microwavable box.

BLOW-OUT



Chef's Collection Pegboard, Kreisdesign, £195. This sleek chef's pegboard will keep your kitchen in order.