

November Recipe

Welsh Cawl

This soup is as Welsh as dragons and has its roots in the mists of time. I am not sure why it is called cawl – I have found some reference to the caul being a sheep's stomach and occasionally being used as one of the ingredients. However, cawl nowadays seems to mean soup in Welsh and there are as many varieties as there are mountains in Wales. It is reputed to taste even better if you gently sing in Welsh as the pot simmers.

SERVES 6-8



1Kg / 2 1/4 lb lamb shoulder bone in
1 large onion peeled and roughly chopped
7 peppercorns
1 handful of chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 handful of fresh parsley to serve
50g / 2 oz butter
1 small swede peeled and cut into 2cm / 3/4 inch cubes
1 large parsnip peeled and cut into 2cm / 3/4 inch cubes
3 carrots peeled and cut into 2cm / 3/4 inch cubes
2 large potatoes peeled and cut into 2cm / 3/4 inch cubes
2 leeks cleaned, trimmed and finely sliced
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Put the lamb, onion, peppercorns and parsley into a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a very gentle boil, then simmer for 2 hours. Skim off any foam or scum that rises to the surface and throw it away. Take off the heat and allow to cool.

Remove the meat to a bowl and strain the stock. Refrigerate the stock until the fat solidifies and can be scraped off (see Tip). Strip the meat from the bones and fat, keeping it in big chunks. Discard the fat and bones. Melt the butter in a large pot and fry all the chopped veg except the leeks for about 10 minutes or until beginning to brown, not forgetting to stir every now and again. Pour the stock and meat into the veg and bring to a gentle simmer for 15 minutes. Transfer the chunks of meat to a bowl to cool, add the leeks to the soup and continue to bubble. When the meat is cool enough to handle, cut off any wobbly bits and discard, then cut the meat into bite-sized pieces. Return to the pot, season to taste and serve with fresh parsley stirred through, a chunk of Cheddar, white rolls and fresh butter.

TIP: You can also take off the fat by throwing a handful of ice into the stock to cool it quickly, then scooping out the ice and discarding it – the fat clings to the ice.