



NIGERIAN

Beef Pepper Soup

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Basic	6	15 min	2 hr 30 min	Simmer	Shank

Ingredients

- 1.2 kg (2 $\frac{2}{3}$ lb) bone-in beef shank, in 4 cm (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) slices
 - 2.5 litres (10 cups) water
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 2 tsp salt, plus more to taste
 - 1 stock cube, crumbled (optional)
 - 2 tbsp Nigerian pepper soup spice mix (or the blend below)
 - 1 to 2 scotch bonnet peppers (or habanero), whole or chopped
 - 1 tbsp ginger, grated
 - 3 cloves garlic, grated
 - 2 tbsp chopped fresh scent leaves, basil, or culantro
 - 1 medium yam or 3 potatoes, cut into chunks (optional)
- SUBSTITUTE SPICE BLEND**
- 1 tsp ground black pepper, 1 tsp ground cloves, 1 tsp ground nutmeg, 1 tsp ground coriander, 1 tsp ground ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cayenne

Steps

1. Put the shank, onion, salt and stock cube in a large pot with the water. Bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Skim the foam for 5 minutes, until the surface is clear, then reduce the heat to low.
3. Add the ginger, garlic and the pepper soup spice. Stir once.
4. Simmer with the lid ajar for 2 hours, until the meat is tender and nearly falls from the bone.
5. Add the scotch bonnet. For a milder soup, leave the pepper whole and remove it after 10 minutes.
6. If using yam, add it now and cook 15 minutes, until a knife slides in easily.
7. Taste the broth for salt and heat. It should be thin, intensely peppery and aromatic.
8. Stir in the scent leaves, turn off the heat and let it sit for 5 minutes. Serve hot in mugs or bowls.

Notes

- **Heat:** scotch bonnets are very hot; use half and do not break the skin for gentler heat.
- **Spice mix:** the commercial blend contains uda and uziza seeds; the home blend above gets close.
- **Serving:** pepper soup is a classic remedy for colds and is eaten as a starter or with boiled yam or rice.
- **Slow cooker:** cook the shank, aromatics and spices on low 8 hr or high 4–5 hr. Add the whole pepper at the end, and the yam for the last hour.
- **Freezer:** the broth and meat freeze for 3 months; cook yam or potatoes fresh when reheating.