

South African Lamb Potjie Stew

This traditional South African lamb stew, cooked slowly in a potjie (cast iron pot), combines tender lamb with aromatic spices, root vegetables, and dried fruits for a rich and hearty meal.



African

120 min

Total time

Medium

Difficulty

450

kcal / serving

Nutrition per serving (estimated)

Protein 27 g

Carbs 34 g

Fat 21 g

Fiber 5 g · Sugar 12 g · Sodium 650 mg

Ingredients

- 200g lamb shoulder, cubed
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 small carrot, diced
- 1 small potato, diced
- 50g butternut squash, diced
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1/4 tsp chili flakes
- 50ml beef or lamb stock
- 50ml canned chopped tomatoes
- 2 dried apricots, chopped
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Fresh coriander leaves for garnish

Steps

- 1 Heat the vegetable oil in a potjie or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat.
- 2 Add the chopped onion and garlic, sauté until soft and fragrant.
- 3 Add the lamb cubes and brown on all sides.
- 4 Stir in ground coriander, cumin, turmeric, and chili flakes, cooking for 1 minute.
- 5 Add the diced carrot, potato, and butternut squash, stirring to coat with spices.
- 6 Pour in the stock and canned tomatoes, bring to a gentle simmer.
- 7 Add the chopped dried apricots and season with salt and pepper.

- 8

Cover the pot and cook on low heat for about 1.5 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally, until lamb is tender and vegetables are cooked through.
- 9

Adjust seasoning if needed.
- 10

Garnish with fresh coriander leaves before serving.

Substitutions

- Butternut squash** – Use an equal amount of diced pumpkin.
- Dried apricots** – Use an equal amount of chopped dried peaches.
- Fresh coriander leaves** – Use chopped flat-leaf parsley for a fresh, mild garnish.

Chef's tips

- Look for lamb that yields easily to a fork and vegetables that hold their shape; vigorous boiling can make the meat tougher and the vegetables break down.
- A heavy potjie or Dutch oven retains heat well. If the stew thickens before the lamb is tender, add a small splash of stock.
- Chop the apricots finely so their sweetness is spread throughout the stew rather than concentrated in a few bites.

Drink pairing

A medium-bodied red like a Cinsault

Its bright fruit and moderate tannins complement the lamb and warm spices without overwhelming the stew's gentle sweetness.

0% option: Sparkling water with a squeeze of lemon

Storage

Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours in a covered container and keep for 3–4 days. Reheat until steaming hot.

Frequently asked questions

How can I tell when the lamb is tender?

It should yield easily when pressed with a fork, without feeling chewy or resistant.

Can I make the stew ahead?

Yes. Cook it a day ahead, refrigerate promptly, and reheat until steaming hot; the flavors may meld as it rests.

What should I serve with lamb potjie?

Serve it with crusty bread or a simple side of rice to soak up the rich, spiced sauce.