THE STIRRING LIFE

Bazalia with Potatoes

Iraqi sweet pea and beef stew

Ground beef and sweet peas simmered in a lemony tomato broth, with sautéed potatoes
Serve over white rice

INGREDIENTS

The Stew

- 1½ cups chopped onions (about 2 small onions)
- Olive oil, for sautéing
- 2 lb ground beef
- About 8 oz tomato paste
- 6–7 cups water
- 4 Tbsp lemon juice, or the juice of 2 lemons
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Peas & Potatoes

- 2 square boxes frozen sweet peas
- 1½–2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- Olive oil or butter, for the potatoes

To Serve

- White rice, cooked separately

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sauté the onions. In a 6 to 8 quart pot, sauté the chopped onions in olive oil until softened.
2. Brown the beef. Add the ground beef and cook, breaking it up, until browned through. Season well with salt and pepper.
3. Add the tomato paste. Stir it into the meat and let it cook for a minute or two, until it darkens slightly and loses its raw edge.
4. Simmer. Add about half the water, 3 to 3½ cups, and simmer for about 45 minutes, until the meat is tender and has taken up most of the liquid.
5. Sauté the potatoes. Meanwhile, in a separate pan, sauté the diced potatoes in olive oil or butter until soft and golden at the edges. Set aside.
6. Add the peas. Stir the frozen sweet peas into the pot along with the lemon juice, adding more of the remaining water as needed for a loose, stew-like consistency. Add any other spices you like here.
7. Finish. Fold in the sautéed potatoes and let everything simmer together a few minutes more. Taste and adjust the lemon, salt and pepper.
8. Serve. Spoon over white rice.

**Potatoes are my addition, and the reason this is bazalia with potatoes rather than plain bazalia. Sautéing them separately keeps them from breaking apart in the stew.*