

Georgian lamb stew

Serves — 4-ish.

Ingredients (all measures approximate)

700g diced lamb	10g fresh mint (or 1 tsp dried)
2 red onions	1 tsp allspice powder
3 cloves garlic	50ml vermouth or similar
150-200g parsnips	2 pears, peeled, cored and diced
1 romano pepper	salt and pepper to taste
10g fresh basil (or 1tsp dried if need be)	

Method (all description approximate)

- Cut lamb into 12mm dice, trimming any fat/connective tissue. If desired, dust with a little cornflour/paprika mix (you don't want the sauce to congeal). Brown the meat lightly, and remove it from the pan. Cut the onion vertically into thin wedges, and peel and dice the garlic. Slice the parsnips to 3mm, and de-seed and decorticate the pepper, cutting it into fine strips
- At a low heat, soften the onion, garlic, parsnips (or carrot, but parsnips match the colour of the pear and their tastes balance) and romano pepper (use red capsicum at a pinch, but keep the strips thinner). Add allspice and roughly torn herbs. Slide the meat (and any juices on the plate) back into the pan. Stir it all up to mix it together, Add the vermouth (if you can find walnut-infused, so much the better — apple juice would be an OK substitute, but will lack some of the tang), bring almost to a boil, then cut the heat to a blip.
- After an hour or so (sample the meat), add the pears (peeled and diced) and stir it all up. Cook slowly until the fruit is soft but not disintegrating, by which time it will have absorbed the other flavours, particularly that of the romano pepper. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with rice or potato; alternatively, stir in a tin of cannellini beans for the last few minutes.