

Never tempt a hungry raccoon

Gerry is writing today...

This story started with two pounds of stewing meat.

We had some friends over for dinner who raise beef cattle (this was last year in late September). They brought us two pounds of stewing beef to try. Some may think this is a very strange hostess gift, but I thought it was great and appreciated their gesture.

In October I used the first pound in a recipe we featured called crock pot beef stew. We had so many good comments on that recipe that I decided to make a vegetable beef soup for the paper with the other pound. I thought as the weather was chilling down, a pot of soup on the stove would be handy to have, as we would be outside gardening and doing fall cleanup most of the weekend.

So Friday morning, out came the crock pot and I started my experimental recipe.

By 10 a.m. we could already smell the flavourful aroma. At 7 p.m. we ate several bowls of this hearty soup with biscuits—boy was it good! Hot and filling! We were already looking forward to the next day for leftovers, when the flavours would have had even more time to incorporate.

My refrigerator was full so I put the crock pot on a cabinet on the deck for the evening. I sometimes use this area as an outdoor refrigerator, as the temperatures drop to a safe degree.

Well, Saturday morning what did I find on my deck? Not what I was expecting.

A crock pot with the garbage bag (that was safely tied around the pot) unwrapped and the lid off, half of the soup missing and spilled soup all around the area.

I guess the raccoons enjoyed a veritable feast!

It was sort of amusing, really.

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



My grandson wanted to sit watch on Saturday night with his bow and arrow and he teased me mercilessly.

This episode would have ended, except that I had called a good friend on Friday evening and offered to share our huge pot of soup, if he brought me his

Tupperware to fill on Saturday. So before I even dressed or ate breakfast, I had my dutch oven on the burner, starting another pot of beef, vegetables and stock.

So by noon, we enjoyed pot number two of vegetable beef soup—this time made with left-over beef from a roast and it was equally delicious.

I think I have learned my lesson. Now when I need extra refrigeration, I store things under the heavy lid of the barbecue. Hopefully they aren't strong enough to lift the lid and hopefully Dave remembers to check before he turns on the grill.

Have fun and keep cooking!

(Lori and Gerry can be reached at whatscookin@independent-freepress.com)

Crock Pot 'Raccoon' Soup

Ingredients

- 1 lb. stewing beef, cut in small pieces
- 1-28oz can crushed stewed tomatoes
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 spanish onion, diced
- 3 celery stalks, sliced
- 2 parsnips, diced
- 2 cups fresh or frozen corn
- 3-28 oz cans beef stock
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp fresh basil or 1 tsp dried
- 1 tsp savoury
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley or 1 tsp dried
- salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Put first eight ingredients in the crock pot. Stir to evenly distribute. Add dried spices (not fresh ones yet). Cook on low for about 6 hours. Taste, then add salt and pepper and fresh herbs. Cook for 2 more hours on low. **Cook's note:** If you are not home to check on the soup 6 hours into the cooking process, just let it cook for the full 8 hours and then add the fresh herbs, salt and pepper just before you eat.



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