

Leyla Weighs In: My tried and true pot roast



Pot roast is a tried and true comfort dish in my home. And because it's a low and slow cook, I'll take the time on the weekend—on a snowy Saturday or Sunday afternoon like we've had lately—to get it started to have in time for dinner.

I prefer a chuck roast above all other cuts of meat for this dish—and a nicely marbled one too. I generally choose one that's 2 ½ to 3 ½ lbs., which will take between 2 ½ and 4 hours to cook overall. Not a quick weeknight go-to dinner as you can imagine!

I'll preheat the oven to 275 degrees Fahrenheit before getting started. Then, in a good-sized Dutch oven on the stovetop, I'll sear the chuck roast on each side in a combination of olive oil and butter or ghee. This will take a good several minutes. Once it's browned on all sides, remove it and set it aside on a plate. I'll add roughly chopped onions (any type will do, but white, yellow, or red onion are usually what I choose from), and roughly chopped carrots, maybe a stalk of celery too. If I have mushrooms (baby bellas, cremini, white, etc.), I'll throw those into the pot. Sauté these for several minutes until the onions soften.

If I don't have a bunch of fresh mushrooms, I'll rehydrate a handful of dried mushrooms and bring them up to a simmer in a separate pot with a few cups of water

while I'm sautéing the other veggies. I always have dried mushrooms on hand in my cupboard—they're a game changer for adding depth of flavor to broths and stews.

After cooking the vegetables, I'll add some of the mushroom broth or a splash of good red wine (if you happen to have a bottle open) and scrape off the fond that develops on the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon. This is FLAVOR. Then, I'll carefully return the chuck roast to the pot along with any drained juices, and add the rest of the mushroom broth (stand back unless you want a facial!). The broth should cover the meat by about two-thirds—it doesn't have to be completely submerged. You can add water if you don't have any broth.

Season with salt, pepper, fresh thyme (dried is fine, but fresh makes a difference in my opinion), rosemary (optional), and a bay leaf. Bring the pot to a gentle boil, then carefully transfer it into the preheated oven and let it cook for 2 ½ to 3 ½ hours. If you wish to add small red-skinned potatoes, add these to the pot at the two-hour mark and give them an hour to cook.

Now, sometimes I don't want to go to the trouble of first searing the meat and then the vegetables before adding the broth and all that. Sometimes I simply put the meat and all the veggies in the pot, add the seasoning along with the broth or water, bring it to a boil, and transfer it to the oven. Or leave it to simmer on the stovetop for the next three to four hours. I enjoy pot roast this way just as much. But I'm also someone who loves boiled dinner!

To your health!

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