Opinion
EarthBeat



(Unsplash/Steve Wrzeszczynski)



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This recipe is part of a Lent 2025 series where NCR staff will share some of their favorite meatless meals. Sign up for the EarthBeat Reflections email newsletter to receive a recipe in your inbox each Friday of Lent this year.



Thirty-four years ago, the Irish Americans and other parishioners of St. Peter's Parish in the District of Columbia staged an elaborate celebration of Ireland and St. Patrick with Irish music, dancers, bagpipes, food and beer.

And, with a pandemic exception, the D.C. parish in the shadow of the Capitol has celebrated the Emerald Isle every year since.

The brainchild of then-pastor Fr. Michael O'Sullivan, the evening begins with a Saturday vigil Mass. Long past is the orchestral ensemble to perform the Mass of St. Patrick featuring music composed by Philip Green, but the party continues.

The Mass and festivities have included prominent guests over the years, including the Irish ambassador to the United States, bishops who were friends of O'Sullivan, an Irish-born priest, and Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, among others.

In a classic basement parish hall, everyone was served "suds, spuds, salmon and soda bread," as O'Sullivan would describe the offerings. Entertainment included the occasional bagpipes, Irish dancers from the Culkin School of Traditional Irish Dance in Glen Echo, Maryland, and an Irish folk band.



Dancers from the Culkin School of Traditional Irish Dance perform at St. Peter’s Church in March 2023. (NCR photo/James V. Grimaldi)

The feast was canceled five years ago this month but resumed in 2022 at the behest of Barry Wiegand, a longtime parishioner and retired assistant U.S. attorney. Plying me with Belgian ale, Barry goaded, persuaded and dragooned me into helping.

I enjoy cooking, and with Barry's imported spices from Kylemore Acres from County Galway, Ireland, we started a new tradition of making Irish lamb stew, requiring me to hunt down 100 pounds of lamb, all made at the homes of more than a dozen volunteer cooks.

Irish Lamb Stew is not where we are headed in this Lenten recipe column, but before I get to the task at hand, let me invite you to attend our party on Saturday, March 15, 2025, at St. Peter's, in Washington, D.C. Details here.

So what's with the vegan recipe? I thought we should have vegan options and came up with a Guinness Lentil Stew made with the famous Irish stout. That seems right

for this weekend. Slainte.



Lentils (Unsplash/César Hernández)

Vegan Irish lentil Guinness stew

Servings – about 8
Prep time – 20 minutes
Cook time – 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 sweet onions, rough chopped
- 6 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon ground peppercorn
- 1/2 teaspoon of garlic salt

- 3 large carrots, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 stalks of celery, chopped small
- 1 pound Yukon Gold or baby gold potatoes (or whatever kind), cut into bite-sized pieces
- 22 oz. Guinness Irish stout
- 5 cups vegetable or mushroom broth or stock
- 2 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 1/2 cups red or brown lentils, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons water

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven or large pot, heat the oil until it shimmers. Add the onion, salt and pepper. Caramelize to golden brown.
2. Add the carrots and celery. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring often. Stir in cornstarch and cook for 1 minute. Add finely sliced or minced garlic and stir for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Stir in the rest of the ingredients, except for the lentils, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer low for 30 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.
4. Stir in the lentils and simmer for 25-45 minutes or until potatoes are soft and the lentils are tender but still hold their shape.
5. Mix together the cornstarch and water and stir into the stew. Simmer for 3 more minutes.
6. If the lentils seem dry, add more liquid, such as Guinness or stock.
7. Serve with crusty bread.

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