

Simon's South African Christmas *Oxtail Potjie*

A festive bushveld classic, slow-cooked the South African way. If you can't join us in Kruger, bring a taste of safari into your home this Christmas.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2–2.5 kg (4–5 lbs) oxtail, cut into sections
- 2–3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, sliced into rings
- 4–6 baby potatoes, halved
- 2–3 carrots, chopped
- 1 cup butternut, cubed
- 1 cup green beans, trimmed
- 1 cup mushrooms, halved
- 1 small head broccoli, cut into florets
- 2 red or green chillies (optional)
- 2–3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1–2 bay leaves

SAUCE MIX:

- 1 Tbsp dried mixed herbs
- 4 Tbsp barbecue or all-purpose grill spice mix (UK/US substitute: use a smoky BBQ rub + a pinch of paprika & cumin)
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup tomato ketchup
- ½ cup chutney (substitute: mango chutney or mix of apricot jam + mild BBQ sauce)
- 1 Tbsp chunky apricot or peach jam/preserve (optional, for extra sweetness)
- 1 instant stew/soup mix packet (South Africa: oxtail or minestrone; UK/US: beef stock cube + 1 Tbsp tomato paste) dissolved in 2 cups boiling water
- 1 cup red wine
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper



PREP TIME: **30 MIN**



COOK TIME: **4 HOURS**



SERVINGS: **6 - 8**

Potjie pairs best with friends, family, and a photo tag to [@wild_wings_safaris](https://www.instagram.com/wild_wings_safaris)

TRADITIONAL POTJIE METHOD (SOUTH AFRICAN STYLE):

1. Get your fire going and place the cast-iron potjie on the coals.
2. Heat oil, then brown the oxtail well (about 15 minutes).
3. Stir in garlic, herbs, spice mix, Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, chutney, apricot jam, dissolved soup mix, chillies, pepper, and wine.
4. Add potatoes and carrots (the firm vegetables). Cover and simmer gently.
5. After about 1 hour, add softer vegetables (butternut, beans, mushrooms). Top up with boiling water if needed.
6. Layer sliced onions on top — they'll soften into the stew.
7. Add broccoli in the last 15–20 minutes so it stays bright and crisp.
8. Keep the pot simmering gently for 4 hours, topping coals as needed. The meat should fall off the bone.

DUTCH OVEN / SLOW COOKER METHOD (FOR WINTER KITCHENS):

Dutch oven (stovetop + oven):

1. Preheat oven to 160°C / 325°F.
2. On stovetop, brown oxtail in olive oil in your Dutch oven.
3. Add sauce mix, potatoes, carrots, and wine. Cover and transfer to oven.
4. Cook for 3–3.5 hours, checking liquid levels halfway (top up with boiling water or stock).
5. Add butternut, beans, and mushrooms for the last 45 minutes.
6. Stir in onions, then add broccoli for the final 15 minutes.

Slow cooker (set & forget):

1. Brown oxtail first in a skillet, then transfer to slow cooker.
2. Mix sauce separately and pour over oxtail with potatoes, carrots, wine.
3. Cook on LOW for 8–9 hours or HIGH for 5–6 hours.
4. Add butternut, beans, mushrooms about 1.5 hours before serving.
5. Add onions and broccoli in the last 20–30 minutes.

Simon's Tips:

Straight from the bushveld fireside, here are Simon's golden rules for a perfect potjie — simple, practical, and guaranteed to take your oxtail to the next level.

- **Brown it properly:** Take your time with the oxtail browning stage. It builds the deep flavour base of the whole pot.
- **Low and slow wins:** Whether on the fire, in the oven, or in a slow cooker, steady low heat makes the meat fall off the bone.
- **Keep the liquid level right:** Top up with boiling water (never cold) if the sauce gets too thick.
- **Don't overdo the broccoli:** Add it right at the end to keep its colour and crunch.
- **Make it your own:** If you can't get Mrs Balls Chutney, try mango chutney, or mix BBQ sauce with apricot jam.
- **Spice to taste:** Simon loves chillies, but add them only if you want the extra kick.

Serving suggestion: Best enjoyed with rice, mashed potatoes, or fresh crusty bread — and, of course, a good South African red wine!

Conversion & Substitution *Guide*

Cooking outside South Africa? No worries. Use this quick guide to swap ingredients and measurements so the recipe works perfectly in a UK or US kitchen.

South African Ingredient/Measure	UK/US Equivalent / Substitute
Mrs Balls Original Chutney	Mango chutney OR ½ BBQ sauce + ½ apricot jam
6-Gun Grill Spice Mix	BBQ rub + pinch paprika & cumin
Packet Oxtail/Minestrone Soup	1 beef stock cube + 1 Tbsp tomato paste
¼ cup (60 ml)	4 Tbsp / 2 fl oz
½ cup (120 ml)	8 Tbsp / 4 fl oz
1 cup (250 ml)	240 ml / 8 fl oz
1 Tbsp (15 ml)	1 US Tbsp (same)
1 kg (2.2 lbs)	2.2 lbs
2–2.5 kg oxtail	4–5 lbs oxtail



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