

Squirrel & Dumpling Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 squirrels, skinned and quartered
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 2 cups diced carrots
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves (or 1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme)
- 3 bay leaves
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 5 cups broth

FOR THE DUMPLINGS

- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- 3/4 cup buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley, plus more for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Start by getting a big, deep pot. Put it over medium-high heat to melt some butter and olive oil in there. Start your

squirrel pieces with a nice coating of salt and pepper. I find it best to work in batches to keep my pot from getting too crowded. Brown the meat on each side, usually four to six minutes each. Once you get them browned nicely, move them to a plate. Set 'em aside; they're not running off at this point.

2. In the same pot you started with, toss in carrots, celery, and a fair amount of garlic. Cook this down in all the drippings until things start softening up, usually five to seven minutes. Start adding the squirrel pieces back in, and add the chicken broth, onion powder, garlic powder, bay leaves, and thyme. Bring things up to a simmer, and cook until your squirrel is fall-off-the-bone tender. I usually need 30 to 40 minutes for that, but the recipe is worth it. Pull it out. Toss the bay leaves and thyme stems after they do their job. Scoop the squirrel out, dispose of the bones, shred up the meat, and return it to the pot.

3. Now, you want to thicken up your broth. Get a large measuring cup or bowl, and ladle 2 cups of the cooking liquid into that. Whisk in a half-cup of flour until you get a smooth consistency. Keep stirring your pot, and pour the flour mixture in slowly. Let things simmer while you do more whisking. You want the broth to get nice and thick. That usually takes me between eight and 10 minutes.

4. It's squirrel dumplings time! Get a medium bowl, and whisk together a quarter teaspoon salt and pepper, baking soda, baking powder, cornmeal, and flour. Stir in buttermilk, melted butter, and minced parsley until they get just a bit sticky. Turn your heat to low so you can start dropping

roughly tablespoon-sized balls of your dumpling dough into your simmering broth. Cover your pot. Let the dumplings cook for 12 to 15 minutes until firm. Add a bit more salt and pepper if you want, and sprinkle some fresh parsley for a nice finish before you serve