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**Dinner For One Alternative - Recipe - Healthy Beef Stew**

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I remember the loneliest food item I ever saw — I was visiting my father for one of 'his' weekends and I must have been no more than 10 years old. I stood in his kitchen, a very masculine kitchen with rich wood cabinets and faux brick floors (it was the early eighties). He had heavy wood Venetian blinds and a microwave about the size of Oklahoma. It was a warm place, a place where pancakes were made.

My Dad had a way with many culinary delights including steak *au poivre*, chef salad with the most perfect pinwheels of roast beef, turkey, Virginia ham and gruyere, and, of course, his signature vanilla bean ice cream with amaretto and fresh strawberries. Still, as I peered into his cupboard, I could not help the huge wave of sadness that washed over me. There it was, all alone on the second shelf, the loneliest food item ever created: Campbell's Soup for One. It stood there sort of half turned to the right as if it were somehow ashamed of itself, stunted-looking at half the size of the normal Campbell's and with no sign of the joyous illustration that graced the full-size cans. I couldn't help asking my father about it. He explained that he really only cooked when my brother and I were with him, or if friends came by. He never really cooked for himself because he did not see the sense in it as a single father who mostly dined with clients or the lady du jour.

Just tonight I saw the second loneliest thing ever. A man -- he could not have been more than 28 — stood in the back aisle freezer section at the Duane Reade. I had a creeping suspicion he was plucking his dinner from the frozen food case, choosing between Hot Pockets and Lean Cuisine. I thought to myself — is this all there is for him? Where is the love in a Hot Pocket? The answer is simple: There is no love in a Hot Pocket and for sure there is no love in the frozen food aisle at the Duane Reade.

And so it goes, my mission, to help young single men everywhere find the love in their dinners. To free themselves from culinary lifelessness. To once and for all take charge of their gustatory bliss. To embrace the possibility of nourishing themselves with such fervor that life has new meaning and each day brings about the promises of many new adventures.

Here are a few tips to save you from the sorrows of no-love food:

**Get it!** If you have time, you are in the best city for shopping There are an abundance of natural food stores in NYC -- Whole Foods, Trader Joes, and plenty of mom and pop health food stores (my favorite is A Matter Of Health

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**HEALTHY BEEF STEW RECIPE****Ingredients:**

(Use organic whenever possible)

- 1 lb. naturally raised beef for stew (available at the farmers market or at Whole Foods)
- 1 cup red lentils (rinsed)
- 1 cup wild rice blend (soaked overnight, rinsed and strained)
- 1 sliced cup carrots
- 1 and a 1/2 cups chopped leek
- 1 cup celery
- 8 cups filtered water
- 2 tbsp vegetable bullion (I like organic "Better than Bullion" soup base)
- 2 tbsp first pressed organic olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme ( 2 tbsp. dry)
- 1 dash cinnamon (or to taste)
- 1 dash cumin
- 1 dash cayenne pepper

**Preparation:**

1. Brown beef in olive oil in a large stew pot, set aside in a bowl.
2. Add water, lentils and rice to the pot, bring to a boil, then reduce to simmer add bullion and simmer for 10 minutes with lid.
3. Add vegetables, beef, thyme and cayenne, cumin and cinnamon; cook covered for an additional 30 minutes or until beef is fully cooked.

on 77th St. and 1st. Avenue). Find a list of [green markets](#) where the food is local, in season and mostly organic. If you are too busy to shop, you can order groceries and have them delivered. Try [Diamond Organics](#) - this site has everything from organic beer to every kind of vegetable – they even sell prepared foods surely made with love and while you are there you can send someone you care for an organic floral bouquet!

**Take a class!** Taking a cooking class is a fantastic way to learn the skills to nourish yourself and hopefully nourish that special lady sometime soon. As the cliché goes, “the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach,” but I must say from experience that I have been seduced by perfectly poached fish with morel sauce at least once. There are few things sexier than watching a man cook, his brow glistening as he tastes his creation, knowing that it’s all for me. I will let you in on a secret that all mothers tell their daughters: “You do not go over to a man’s house for dinner unless you intend to be the dessert.” If a lady is at your house and you are cooking, it is almost guaranteed action. Here are two great places to take a cooking class; [The Natural Gourmet School](#), [www.andreabeaman.com](http://www.andreabeaman.com)

**Try something simple.** A one pot meal is a great place to start. For winter, I fancy stews and find that they are a fool proof choice.

This creamy beef stew will warm you up and call you back for seconds! (See Sidebar)

I know that by following these simple techniques you are now changing your gastronomic fate. You are taking the necessary steps to foster the kind of powerhouse nutrition that gets you through grueling office days and times of isolation. You are giving yourself love and honoring those who have the good fortune to come to your table.

Now go out there and cook something damn it!

Serves 6 people

You can serve this with some sautéed broccoli , steamed collard greens or a big salad it is also a good idea have some apples on hand for dessert. Other sites to peruse for delicious simple recipes: [www.andreabeaman.com](http://www.andreabeaman.com) and <http://www.integrativenutrition.com/recipes.asp>

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Donna Sonkin is a Certified Holistic Health Counselor accredited with the American Association Of Drugless Practitioners. Donna’s **“Get Thin For The Camera”** program is devoted to helping actors, models and performers of all types achieve their optimum weight through a ‘whole food nutrition’ approach.

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