

Mushroom Barley Soup

1 lb	stewing beef, cut into 1-inch cubes
½ tsp	pepper
½ tsp	thyme
2 tbsp	olive oil
1 cup	onions, chopped
1 cup	celery, diced
1 cup	carrots, diced
4 cups	mushrooms, sliced
8 cups	beef broth, low sodium
½ cup	barley
1	bay leaf
	freshly ground pepper

- Cook barley for 30 minutes; drain, rinse and put aside.
- Season beef cubes with pepper and thyme.
- In large soup pot, heat 1 tbsp oil over medium-high heat; brown beef about 5 minutes. Remove to plate. Drain off any fat in pan.
- Add remaining oil to pan; cook onions, celery and carrots over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until tender and onions are translucent, about 5 minutes.
- Add mushrooms; cook, stirring often, until mushroom liquid begins to evaporate, about 5 minutes.
- Stir in broth, scraping up any brown bits in pan.
- Add partially cooked barley, bay leaf, browned beef and any accumulated juices to pan; bring to boil.
- Reduce heat to low and simmer until beef and barley are tender, about 30 minutes. Discard bay leaf. Season with freshly ground pepper. Makes 8 servings.

Recipe by Gary Barone