



Sheep Stew

Narrated by Stanley Woodward

1. The Sheep Stew tradition (04:03)

<Video opens with Saddler Taylor `driving>

S. Taylor: Now Stan, we have seen a lot of darn good stews in South Carolina. But South Carolina Upstate hash reminds me a lot of a sheep stew done in Lunenburg County, Virginia in this little town called Dundas. Now Dundas is in the middle of Brunswick Stew territory, but I can guarantee you you wont find any butter beans or any type corn in this kind of stew, only mutton.

<Video shows different shots of the Village of Dundas>

Now the recipe is real similar to South Carolina Upstate hash, but their inclusion of mutton is a similarity shared only with the Burgoo of Western Kentucky. What's really interesting is only a few years ago, the folks making the sheep stew up in Dundas would have used sheep raised right there in the community.

<Video shows archived film from a previous Dundas sheep stew cooking>

S. Taylor: These farmers used to cook on wood, but that's another interesting change in the tradition they've made. They realize it's a lot easier and less time consuming, as far as labor is concerned, to cook on gas. So they've cannibalized parts from a local tobacco barn to use under their big iron parts, instead of the traditional wood.

<Video shows Saddler Taylor inspecting the burners for the stew pots>

S. Taylor: And I can imagine the wood-fired method was much more, uh, time consuming, much more laborious. You really had to watch, uh, each fire and keep it at a good even pace. Uh, but now you've got these burners down here. I imagine that's a much more convenient way to do the stew.

<Video shows Maxie Moore and Johnny Hawthorne walking up>

S. Taylor: Well it looks like we've got some stew masters coming up here. This is Maxie Moore and Johnny Hawthorne.

J. Hawthorne: How yall doin'?

S. Taylor: Hey guys.

M. Moore: Good morning.

<Video shows Saddler Taylor and then Johnny Hawthorne's book>

S. Taylor: Tell me about this little book you've got in your hand here.

J. Hawthorne: Well this is a list that I started, uh, when Maxcy, one of my first stews that I trained and Maxcy-I followed him around here for a day and I wrote-I wrote down exactly what he did like start the fires and put the meat on and when he had it boilin' and put a time beside everything, right through the day and it's my guide to what to do to cook the stew and...

S. Taylor: Right.

<Video shows Maxie Moore>

M. Moore: We needed to have somebody else that uh-in case somethin' happened to me. I'm-of course everybody knows I'm a little older than I used to be, but uh, and somebody had to-had to carry on, so I recommended Johnny. I could tell by the way he held himself around the stew it all-that I thought he would be a good person to pass it on to. He kind of speaks with authority and he doesn't mind work. Uh, when the time comes to do somethin', he's gon' do it. Uh, and I think that people will respect him and the fact that they will do what he says do-and you can't have to many people; too many cooks will spoil the-spoil the broth I've always heard.

<Video shows Johnny Hawthorne>

J. Hawthorne: Maxie will be the stew master until-until he goes to the cemetery up there.

S. Woodward: Ok.

J. Hawthorne: We don't-you don't-I'll be stew master in training until Maxie isn't here. Maxie will never see me cook a stew as stew master. But a lot of the grumblin' you gon' hear if you around here when we cookin' a stew is, "Man my pot's too hot. It's boilin' over. My pot's too thick, it needs more water in it." And-and-and if you're gon' cook a sheep stew and it's cooked and done at five o'clock, it's gon' have to boil and it's gonna have to have a ['bull roast'] I call it, under it most of the day. You can't listen to what everybody on every pot and-

S. Taylor: Right.

J. Hawthorne: And the group that's sittin' around go to tellin' you. You got to do what you know is right.

<Video shows clips of people buying the completed stew>

<Video shows a child with a box on his head>

Woman: Take that box off your head! *<They all laugh>*