

## Bangers & Mash – Comfort du Jour

There cannot possibly be a food more deserving of the title “pub grub” than a classic plate of bangers and mash. This hearty, stick-to-your-ribs dish is original to Ireland and other parts of the U.K., and a real treat on St. Patrick’s Day. The potatoes are fluffy with a hint of horseradish, and my version of the gravy has sautéed onions, a very generous glug of Guinness stout, plus some broth. This gravy is big and bold, and if you wish, you can shift the ratio of stout or leave it out altogether in favor of beef broth—I’ll leave that up to you.

The preparation of these three components (bangers, mash and gravy) will happen concurrently; if you are working ahead, the whole meal heats up nicely as leftovers.

### INGREDIENTS

Package of Irish banger sausages (or similar substitute)  
1/2 cup Guinness stout ale\*  
2 1/2 lbs. starchy potatoes (I used a combination of russet and golds)  
4 Tbsp. salted butter  
1/2 cup thick buttermilk  
1 1/2 tsp. prepared horseradish  
Salt and pepper

### GUINNESS ONION GRAVY

3 Tbsp. salted butter  
1 large yellow onion, sliced (mine was about the size of a softball)  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour  
1 cup Guinness stout ale  
1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth  
2 tsp. beef bouillon base\*  
2 tsp. dark brown sugar  
Salt and pepper

### \*NOTES

The Guinness stout ale is very strong, and carries a somewhat bitter note. I believe the secret to making delicious gravy with the stout is cooking it slowly, so the malty flavors remain but the alcohol cooks out and mellows in flavor. If you are averse to the bitter flavor, or avoiding alcohol, substitute a hearty beef stock for similar results. This recipe calls for a 12 oz. bottle; you will use part of it to simmer the sausages and the rest to finish the onion gravy. I purchased the “Foreign Extra” stout, but for less intense flavor, use a Guinness draught stout.

I use vegetable broth regularly for the nutrients and flavors, and I have amped up the flavor with a hearty spoon of beef bouillon base. If you prefer, skip the base and use all beef broth.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Peel the potatoes and cut them up into large chunks. Cook in salted water over medium-low heat until fork tender.
2. Drain potatoes in a colander. While potatoes drain, add butter and buttermilk to the cooking pot over medium heat until butter is mostly melted.
3. Return hot potatoes to the pot and mash, seasoning with salt and pepper. Stir in horseradish and additional butter, if desired.
4. While the potatoes are cooking, place a medium, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat and pour in 1/2 cup of the Guinness stout. Add sausages to the stout and simmer, turning sausages a few times, until sausage is plump and stout is reduced to a couple of tablespoons. This should take about 25 minutes. Transfer sausages to a separate dish and set aside to make the gravy.
5. Pour any remaining reduced stout into a glass measuring cup, along with vegetable broth and beef base.
6. Add butter to the same pot used to simmer the sausages, and add onions and garlic. Season with salt and pepper and sauté over medium heat until onions are soft and translucent, at least 10 minutes.
7. Sprinkle flour over onions in butter and stir until onions are coated and flour begins to cook. This is a roux that will be the thickener for your gravy. When the bottom of the pan begins to accumulate cooked, stuck-on flour, move the onions aside and pour in about half of the remaining Guinness stout. Stir, scraping up the cooked flour from the bottom.
8. When the pan is de-glazed, pour in the remaining stout and the broth mixture, and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture is thickened and reduced. You should take about 25 minutes for this step; don't rush it, as simmering is necessary to blend the flavors and reduce the innate bitterness of the stout. Give it a taste and adjust salt and pepper as desired. If the gravy is overly bitter, stir in the brown sugar and simmer a few more minutes.
9. Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Swirl in a small amount of olive oil and add the plump banger sausages. Cook and turn until sausages are fully reheated and nicely browned.
10. Plate the mashed potatoes, spoon on a bit of Guinness gravy, then top with bangers and a generous ladle of the onion gravy.