

Boeuf Bourguignon

Serves 8 to 10:

Ingredients

8 ounces slab or thick cut bacon
4 pounds beef chuck steak, preferably organic
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
olive oil
1/2 cup flour, preferably Wondra
2 spanish onions, chopped
1 bunch carrots, peeled and trimmed
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 cup Cognac or brandy
1 bottle good quality Burgundy wine
2 to 3 cups beef stock
1 tablespoon tomato paste

Bouquet Garni:

1 celery stalk, trimmed
3 sprigs fresh thyme
2 bay leaves

1 pound baby cippolini or pearl onions
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 pound cremini or button mushrooms
fresh chives, finely chopped for garnish

Preparation

Stack bacon slices and cut them into skinny pieces or lardons.
Cut steak into 2 inch strips, trimming away excess fat, and then cut into cubes.
Pat beef cubes dry with paper towels to insure they will caramelize well in the pot.
Season liberally with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Preheat oven to 250 degrees.

In a large cast iron dutch oven, heat a tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat, until shimmering.
Add bacon, cook until browned and then remove with a slotted spoon to drain on paper towels.

Place flour into a large sealable plastic bag.

Add batches of beef cubes to the bag, seal and toss to coat with flour.

Place beef in pot in small batches, being careful not to crowd the pan.

Cook until brown on all sides, about 4 to 5 minutes.

Remove meat with a slotted spoon to a plate and repeatedly add batches to pot until all meat is cooked.

Add onions and carrots to fat in pot and season with kosher salt and ground black pepper.

Cook for about 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onions are slightly brown.

Stir in garlic and cook for another minute.

Add 1/2 cup Cognac to the pot, stand back and ignite, using a long match, to burn off alcohol.

When flames die down, add bacon and meat back to pot, with any juices that accumulated on plate.

Pour bottle of Burgundy wine into stew and add enough beef stock to almost cover meat.

Make Bouquet Garni: trim a celery stalk and place thyme sprigs and bay leaves on top.

Secure with a piece of kitchen twine and add bouquet to pot; stir in tomato paste.

Bring pot to a simmer, cover and place in the oven for 1 1/4 hours.

Remove stew from oven, let cool and refrigerate overnight.

Next day, use a large spoon to skim fat from surface; remove bouquet garni.

Slowly bring stew back to a simmer over low heat.

Bring a saucepan of salted water to boil and blanch the onions for 2 minutes.

Drain and rinse with cold water to halt cooking.

Using a small paring knife, peel skins from onions.

Add 1 tablespoon of butter to a 2 1/2 quart saucepan and, when foam subsides, add peeled onions.

Sauté until onions start to turn golden; season with kosher salt and black pepper.

Add 1 1/2 cups of water to saucepan, bring to simmer and cook, partially covered, for 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove cover and continue to cook, stirring, until liquid is reduced to a glaze, another 5 to 8 minutes.

Trim ends of mushrooms; halve or quarter, if too large.

Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in a medium skillet over medium high heat and add mushrooms.

Sauté, stirring only occasionally, for about 8 minutes until mushrooms are golden brown.

Season with kosher salt and black pepper.

When beef comes up to temperature, add onions and mushrooms to stew.

Stir pot and taste, and adjust seasoning if needed.

Divide portions of beef into shallow bowls and evenly distribute carrots, onions and mushrooms.

Spoon sauce on top and garnish with finely chopped chives.