

Braised Oxtail



There has been an upswing in demand for oxtail as people rediscover and discover its pleasures. It has to be cooked long and slow, resulting in a thickened rich sauce and melt-in-the-mouth texture. The dish takes around 4 hours to cook, but the preparation takes only a fraction of that. The wonderful aromas that waft through the house as this dish looks after itself prepare everyone for the feast ahead.

Ingredients

- ♦ 50 g/2 oz plain flour seasoned with salt and pepper
- ♦ 4 oxtails, cut into pieces
- ♦ 2 tablespoons olive oil or 30 g/1 oz butter (or combination of both)
- ♦ 2 medium onions, peeled and thinly sliced
- ♦ 2 thick bacon rashers, chopped
- ♦ 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- ♦ 570 ml/20 fl oz red wine
- ♦ 1 litre/35 fl oz beef stock
- ♦ bouquet garni of a bay leaf, a sprig of thyme, a sprig of parsley and a sprig of rosemary
- ♦ 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- ♦ 2 celery stalks, sliced
- ♦ 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ♦ salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ♦ 1/2 cup parsley, finely chopped

Serves 6

To Cook

The casserole can be cooked on the stove top or in the oven. If you are cooking it in the oven, preheat it to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Put the seasoned flour into a plastic bag and add the oxtail pieces. Shake it well to coat the meat. Heat the oil or butter in a large heavy-based casserole and add the oxtail pieces in small batches. As each batch is browned, remove to a warmed plate with a slotted spoon and repeat until all the meat has been sealed. Add a little more oil if necessary and add the onions and cook until golden. Add the bacon and garlic and cook for 2–3 minutes. Return the meat to the casserole, pour in the wine and simmer until the liquid has reduced by about a third. Add the stock and bouquet garni to the pot and cover. Simmer gently on the stove or cook in the oven for about 2 hours. At this point add the carrots, celery and tomato paste and continue to cook for a further 2 hours or so, until the meat falls off the bone. Adjust the seasoning and sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with mashed potatoes and baked parsnips.