

30 Hour Beef Cheek & Red Wine Ragu with Pappardelle

30 hours to cook something? Don't be ridiculous! Who has time for that?Is that what is running through your head? Well, let me be clear on this. This takes no effort at all. A lot of marinating and a lot of slow cooking make these unsung heroes a work of art in my book. Rich and rewarding and almost by accident (they were marinating for 6 hours when a couple of drinks with the neighbours turned into many that resulted in 24 hour marinating beef cheeks) this succulent and simple dish was simply divine. Don't you love spontaneity!

Prep time: 24 hours and 25 minutes
\$\$ Medium Budget

Cooking time: 6 hours

Serves 6

2 tbs of olive oil

800gm of beef cheeks (ask your butcher to order them for you)

700ml of good red wine (don't bother with anything that you won't drink)

4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

2 brown onions, diced

6 sprigs of rosemary, removed from stems and chopped

12 thyme sprigs, removed from stems and roughly chopped

2 tbs of tomato paste

1 cup of beef stock

1/4 cup of vino cotto*

1 x 400gm tin of chopped tomatoes

2 tbs of finely chopped flat leaf parsley

500gm of pappardelle, cooked to packet instructions

Sea salt and cracked black pepper

Freshly grated parmesan cheese to serve

Place the beef cheeks in a bowl and cover them with red wine. Cover with plastic wrap and pop them in the fridge and forget about them for 12 hours then give them a turn. Forget for another 12 hours.

Remove the beef cheeks from the fridge and bowl and pat dry with paper towel. Reserve the red wine from the marinade for later use. Heat a heavy based, oven proof casserole dish* on the stove and add the oil. Brown the cheeks on both sides until golden and caramelised. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Pre heat the oven to 140°C. In the same pan, add a little more oil if necessary and lightly fry the onion until soft before adding the garlic and herbs. Fry for a further minute or so and then deglaze the pan with the wine and vino cotto. Pour in the stock and tomato paste, stir well and return the cheeks to the pan. Cover the cheeks with a piece of baking paper, making sure to tuck it in and place a tight fitting lid on. Bake in the oven for 6 hours, turning the cheeks every couple of hours and making sure the pan doesn't dry out. If it does add a little water.

After 6 hours, remove the pan from the oven and pop it on the stove top. With two forks, gently shred the cheek meat and then add the tin tomatoes. Bring back to the boil and reduce heat to a simmer, stir well and add a little more water if necessary. Sprinkle over the parsley and then add the cooked pappardelle. Toss well to combine and serve at the table with the grated parmesan, a green salad and some crusty bread.....oh and lets not forget....a really good bottle of red!

* Vino Cotto is a condiment made from the must of grapes. You can buy it at specialty food chops such as The Essential Ingredient. If you don't have a casserole that can go on the stove, prepare in a frypan and then transfer.