

Beef Burgundy with Salt Baked Potatoes

After our recent trip to France I felt I should come home and try to perfect some of their most famous dishes. I think I did ok? Tender, juicy chunks of beef in a rich, herb laden, red wine gravy, dotted with earthy mushrooms and sweet baby onions. You can't go wrong really....can you?

Prep time: 30 Minutes
\$ Low Budget

Cooking Time: 2 1/2 Hours

Serves 6

Olive oil for frying

6 medium Desiree potatoes

1kg of chuck steak, cut into 2-3cm chunks

100gm of speck*, rind removed and sliced into little batons (lardons)

12 pickling onions, peeled

1 punnett of swiss brown mushrooms, halved

8 thyme sprigs

2 bay leaves

4 garlic cloves, finely minced

1 large brown onion, finely diced

2 tbs of plain flour

1 1/2 cups of good red wine

500ml of beef stock (salt reduced preferably)

2 tbs of tomato paste

1 tsp of sugar

Sea salt & cracked black pepper

1/2 cup of finely chopped continental parsley

Heat a large heavy based pan or casserole dish and add a little olive oil. Fry the speck batons until golden and crispy. This may take 5-10 minutes and it will make a mess so use a splatter guard if you have one or get someone else to clean up ☐

Once golden, remove the speck and drain it on a piece of paper towel. Season

the beef and brown it in batches, making sure the pan is nice and hot, until golden and caramelised. Place it in a bowl and set aside.

In the same pan, add a little more oil if necessary and fry the onion and baby onions until they are starting to soften. Add the garlic and herbs and fry for a few minutes then sprinkle over the flour. Stir and cook the flour for about 60 seconds and then pour in the red wine and stock. Stir well, scraping the bottom of the pan to get all the lovely flavour off the bottom.

Bring to a simmer, add the tomato paste and sugar and season with a little salt and pepper. Return the meat and speck to the pan and add the mushrooms. Stir, cover with a piece of baking paper (nice and tucked in) and cover with a tight fitting lid and allow to cook on a low simmer, stirring occasionally for 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until the meat is meltingly tender. Remove the lid for the last 10-15 minutes to allow the sauce to reduce slightly.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the potatoes in a large pot of boiling water and boil for 10 minutes. Drain well and place on a lined baking tray, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle liberally with sea salt and pepper. Bake in the oven for 30-35 minutes until golden and crispy.

Remove the potatoes from the oven and hold one with a tea towel. Make a little cross in the top with a sharp knife and squeeze the potato gently so it bursts at the top. repeat with the remaining potatoes. Place each spud in a shallow bowl or plate and top with a knob of butter. Stir half the parsley through the stew and ladle the stew around the potato. Top with a sprinkling of the remaining parsley and serve with vegetables of your choice.

*Speck is a smoked pork product that can be found in the delicatessen section of the supermarket. You could use bacon or pancetta as a substitute.