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BEEF BOURGUIGNON

A classic French casserole-style meal.

Serves 6

Per serving: 500 calories, 15g fat

Prep time: 15 mins

Cook time: 40 - 55 mins

INGREDIENTS

1kg (2lb) lean braising beef
2 medium onions, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsps chopped fresh thyme
2 beef stock cubes dissolved in 300ml (1/2 pint) water
2 tbsps plain flour
1 bottle red wine
300ml (1/2 pint) tomato passata
4 large carrots
3 celery sticks, cut into 5cm (2in) batons
175g (6oz) button mushrooms
20 baby onions, peeled
salt and freshly ground black pepper
bouquet garni
chopped fresh parsley to garnish

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, 350°F, Gas Mark 4. Cut the beef into 2.5cm (1in) dice, removing all fat and sinew.
2. Season the beef with salt and freshly ground black pepper and place in a preheated, non-stick pan.
3. Seal the meat on all sides in small batches until lightly browned. Remove from the pan and set aside.
4. Add the onions, garlic and thyme to the pan and cook gently for 2 - 3 minutes until soft.
5. Add 2 tbsps of stock, then sprinkle the flour over, stir well and cook for a further minute to 'cook out' the flour.
6. Gradually stir in the remaining stock along with the wine and tomato passata.
7. Cut the carrots into 4cm (1 1/2in) lengths. Using a small sharp knife, carefully peel away the outside skin to form the carrot pieces into barrel shapes.
8. Add the carrots, celery, mushrooms and baby onions to the sauce.
9. Place the beef in the bottom of a large casserole dish and pour the sauce and the vegetables over.

10. Add the bouquet garni and cover with a lid. Place in the oven for 35 - 40 minutes until the sauce has reduced.
11. Remove the bouquet garni, and garnish with parsley before serving.

THICKENING AGENTS

Even though most casseroles use flour in their initial making, sometimes it may not be sufficient to thicken the finished dish. Just add 2 - 3 tsps of cornflour or arrowroot mixed with cold water to a smooth paste before the end of cooking and simmer for 2 - 3 minutes. Add it gradually while continuously stirring the casserole.

CHEF'S TIP

To ease the peeling of small shallots, cover them with boiling water for 1 minute before draining. They will then peel easily.

