

Not Julia's (or even Julie's) Beef Burgundy

from In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens

Ingredients:

1-1/2 pounds stew beef, cut into bite-size pieces
2 cloves of garlic, 1 crushed and 1 minced
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
several turns of the pepper mill
2 tablespoons flour, divided
1 small onion, finely cut
1-1/2 cups red wine (plus a little more if needed)
1 cup water (plus a little more if needed)
several sprigs of thyme
1 bay leaf
2 carrots, cut into bite-size pieces
a small amount of butter for sautéing
1 cup tiny onions with their ends cut off
10 ounces mushrooms, sliced (the slices should be fairly thick—no more than four per mushroom)
chopped parsley for garnish

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees. When it has heated toss the meat, the crushed garlic clove, the oil, and the salt and pepper together in a sturdy, uncovered Dutch oven.

Place the pot in the hot oven until the meat browns (this takes between 10 and 15 minutes). While the meat is in the oven be sure to stir it every few minutes to ensure even browning. When most of us it has browned stir in 1 tablespoon of flour and let it continue to brown.

When the meat is brown carefully remove the pot from the oven and turn the oven off. Use a slotted spoon to take out the garlic clove (which you may discard) and the meat, which you should reserve.

Add the onion and garlic pieces to the gravy in the pot, and sauté them for a couple of minutes.

Whisk in the remaining flour for a minute or two; then deglaze the pan with a little of the wine. Add in the remaining wine and the water; then stir in the thyme and bay leaf, the carrots, and the reserved meat.

Bring the stew to a boil; then cover and reduce the heat. Cook the mixture until the beef can be pierced by a fork (about 2 hours). Check and stir it every half hour, but make sure you cover it completely after checking (you don't want it to dry out!).

If you have time after the beef has cooked, allow the stew to cool to room temperature and then chill it. You will then be able to skim off much of the fat easily. If you don't have time—and/or don't care about fat—ignore this step.

Shortly before you are ready to serve the stew, melt a little butter in a frying pan, and quickly sauté the small onions and the mushrooms. Add them to the beef mixture, and stir to make sure they are covered in sauce.

Taste the sauce and adjust the seasonings. If the flavor is too strong, add a little water. Simmer on the stove top for 5 to 10 minutes.

Garnish the dish with parsley and serve over noodles or potatoes. Serves 6.