

Dan Ralston's Kitchen

Bouef Bourguignon

Serves 8 to 10

1 cup flour
salt and pepper
4 lb. boneless beef chuck
2 tbs. butter
2 tbs. olive oil (or more)
¼ cup brandy
3 cups hearty red wine (burgundy, pinot noire, zinfandel or a cabernet sauvignon
1 cup dry sherry
1 cup port
1 can 14 ½ oz. beef broth
2 - 14 ½ ounce cans can's pearl white onions, drained
1 lb. fresh white mushrooms, scrubbed
1 6 oz. can Contadina tomato paste
2 bay leaves
¼ tsp. allspice
A couple of dashes of Worcestershire Sauce or Balsamic vinegar (optional - just before serving)
24 small new potatoes (optional)

This dish is perfect for a winter dinner party. You can make it a day ahead of time and just slowly reheat it, stirring occasionally, while your guests arrive (you may need to add a little more wine or beef broth if the sauce is too thick.) This is one of those dishes that actually benefits from a day of refrigeration; the flavors combine and mellow overnight.

The first time I tasted "Beef Burgundy" it was being served to Kenyon College Trustees at Cromwell Cottage, the President of Kenyon's residence in Gambier, Ohio. I was a

freshman and had the cush job of serving drinks before dinner. The cook, a central Ohio matron, called the dish “Beef un-pronounceable.” That was 33 years ago! Liz fixed a version of the dish for one of our first dinner parties in Oceanside in 1976. Our guests consisted of fellow First Lieutenants, Captains and their wives from First Battalion, First Marines. After Liz had proudly served the “Bouef Bourguignon” 1st Lt. Roan Timothy displayed a Marines’ culinary sensitivity when he said of the dish “Hey Liz, this is pretty good stew!”

Put the flour in a large plastic bag and season the flour with salt and pepper to taste (be generous with the pepper.) Cut the beef into 2” squares. Add the beef to the flour in the bag, twist it closed then shake the bag so that all of the beef is coated in the seasoned flour. Add the butter and olive oil to a dutch oven and heat over high heat. When the butter and oil are hot, but not smoking (don’t let the butter brown) add the beef in batches and brown on all sides. Remove browned pieces to a plate then finish the other batches of beef, add a little more olive oil per batch, if needed. Turn off the heat and return all the beef to the dutch oven. This next step is a little tricky. Make sure the flame/heat is off underneath your dutch oven and have the lid ready. Pour the ¼ cup brandy over the beef and light it with a match, Let the brandy burn off. If you have a grease flare up don’t panic, just slap the lid in place to smother the fire. After the brandy has burned off return the heat to high and add the wine. Use a wooden spoon to de-glaze the bottom of the pan. (De-glaze is a fancy term for scraping up all of the browned flour and dissolving it in a boiling liquid, in this case the wine.) Add the sherry, the port, the beef broth, the onions and the mushrooms. Bring to a boil and stir in the tomato paste. Stir until the tomato paste is dissolved. Add the bay leaves and the Allspice.
Pre-heat the oven to 300 degrees.

At this point you can add the potatoes if you want to present the dish as an all in one dinner. The options are to make your favorite mashed potato recipe or serve it with egg noodles. My preferences are mashed potatoes or the new potatoes. Cover the dutch oven and place in the middle of your 300 degree oven for 3 hours. Depending on the size of

your dutch oven you may want to put a cookie sheet under it to catch any boil- overs, that has never happened to me but I use an 8 qt oven and most are more like 4 qts.

Just before serving, taste for salt and pepper and adjust accordingly. If you want just a hint of tang and spice use the Worcestershire sauce or balsamic vinegar. Be careful with the vinegar, I'd say not more than half a tsp. Serve the "stew" with the same type of red wine you cooked with (don't ever use "cooking wine," always use a wine that you would be proud to serve with dinner for your cooking,) crusty bread for wiping your dish and a green salad.

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