

Beef Bourguignon

<http://wp.me/pWGRR-1jg>



Serves five

6oz bacon, coarsely chopped into strips
3 lbs beef (shanks, chuck, brisket, round roast), trimmed of excess fat, cut into 2" chunks
1 tbsp white rice flour (optional, see instructions below)
1 small onion, coarsely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp tomato paste
1/2 bottle (375 ml, about 1.5 cups) medium-bodied red wine (pinot noir preferred)
2 cups beef stock
bouquet garni: 4 sprigs fresh parsley, 6 sprigs fresh thyme, 3 bay leaves (fresh preferred, dried okay)
2 tbsp butter
20 pearl onions, peeled
8 white mushrooms, cut into 1/2" pieces
3 carrots, peeled and chopped into bite-size chunks
starch to accompany: boiled potatoes, mashed potatoes, mashed cauliflower, rice

Cook the bacon in a large pot or dutch oven on med/low heat, until crispy. As the bacon cooks, dust your beef pieces with rice flour – this step adds a nice coating to the beef, and helps thicken the sauce. When it's finished cooking, remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and set aside.

Increase the stovetop heat to medium, then add the beef pieces to the bacon grease and brown for about 3 mins per side, in batches if needed, and set aside the beef when done. Add the chopped onions to the pot, sauté until softened and aromatic, about five minutes. Add the tomato paste and garlic, stirring everything together, and sauté until aromatic, about a minute.

Add the beef, bacon, and wine to the pot, and add enough beef stock to cover the beef pieces, about 2 cups. Tie together your bouquet garni with either kitchen twine or some cheesecloth, and add it as well. Bring everything to a simmer, then cover and reduce the heat to low.

You're going to want to simmer everything until the beef becomes tender, which will take about 2 hours (a little longer if you're using a very tough or lean cut of meat). When there is about an hour of cooking left, it's time for the next step, which is prepping and adding the veggies. Boil your pearl onions for a minute, fish them out, let them cool, and cut the root side and slip the skin right off (note: many groceries sell peeled, frozen pearl onions, which are very convenient and eliminates this step). In a separate pan, warm the butter on medium heat, then add the onions and sauté them until aromatic (but not totally softened), about four minutes. Add the carrots and sauté for another minute, then add them to the pot. When there are 20 minutes of cooking left, add the chopped mushrooms.

Once the meat is tender and the veggies are done, remove all of the solids from the pot with a slotted spoon and set aside (it's okay if you don't scoop out all of the onion pieces and bacon). Discard the bouquet garni. Increase the stovetop heat to med/high, and reduce the sauce by about half – you'll want about 3 cups of liquid altogether; the sauce will darken as well, which is a good thing. Once the sauce is reduced, remove it from the heat and gently stir in the meat and veggies. Season to taste, adding about 1 tsp each of salt and pepper, and serve.