

One of the advantages of growing our own beef is that we get to have it custom cut. We always make sure that we get the ribs. Short Ribs used to be one of the thrifty leftover cuts, such as Lamb Shanks. When the art of slow cooking resurfaced in restaurants, these cuts became more expensive. Treating them with the respect that they deserve results in an amazing meal.

Raising animals for food makes me very aware of using the whole. I must admit that there are bits and pieces that find their way into homemade dog food, but for the most part all of it makes for good eating. It's all in the preparation. Take your time, and enjoy the scents of slow cooking, and especially the amazing results. You don't have to do it every day, but it will make for a memorable meal when you do.

The Bordelaise sauce is a lovely mix of caramelized root vegetables & celery (mirepoix), that are cooked in wine as it reduces, then mixed with stock to cook the ribs in. When all is done, the vegetables and liquids get blended together to create a deep, rich sauce. Try to include parsnips in this, as they create a depth to the sauce that the other vegetables only hint at. To be honest, I even had to forgo the celery. Unfortunately I wanted to make the Ribs so much I had to do without. It's that island thing again! Make-do, make-do!

Short Ribs are an excellent dinner party food. Most of the work may be done the day before; in fact I think it is better. So relax and enjoy this rich meal with a lovely glass of deep red wine. Or two.

Beef Short Ribs with Bordelaise Sauce

Ingredients:

3 - 4 lbs bone-in beef short ribs (allow for ½ lb. per person)
2 T oil
Salt & pepper
2 parsnips, peeled, trimmed & chopped (optional, but BEST with!)
2 carrots, peeled, trimmed & chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped (I skipped it but you shouldn't!)
2 yellow onions, peeled, trimmed & chopped
5 garlic cloves, peeled & halved
¼ c tomato purée (can use ketchup in a pinch)
2 cups red wine – burgundy, cabernet sauvignon, merlot all work well
8 cups of beef stock
2 rosemary sprigs
2 bay leaves
Thyme – 3-4 sprigs
Parsley – a handful, coarsely chopped
Note: if you need to use dried herbs, use about ⅓ of the volume that you would use if you were using chopped, fresh herbs.

Directions:

Cut sections of short ribs into individual pieces, or have the butcher do it for you. Season the ribs both sides, with salt & pepper.

In a 6-quart size Dutch oven or any large stovetop safe, ovenproof cookware with a good fitting lid, heat the oil over medium-high heat.

Lay the ribs meat side down in one layer. You will do the searing in two batches, to avoid crowding. Let them cook for 4 minutes. Turn and sear the bone side, cooking for another 4 minutes.

Remove to a platter.

Using the other half of the ribs, repeat the searing process.

Remove to the platter.

Add the mirepoix vegetables to the hot oil. Stir to loosen up the brown bits, and to get the vegetables well oiled.

Cook the vegetables until caramelized. This takes about 8 minutes.

Add in the tomato purée and glaze the caramelized veg.

Slowly add in the 2 cups of wine.

Simmer until reduced by half. This will take about 10 – 15 minutes.

While this is happening, preheat the oven to 325° - check that your racks are place so that you ovenware will be in the center of your oven.

Add in the stock, and return to a simmer.

Add the short ribs back to the pot. Using tongs to bed them in the liquid. There should be enough liquid to barely cover all.

Add in the herbs, submerging them in the liquid.

Cover and place in the preheated oven.

Cook for 3 hours.

Remove from oven.

Take out any herb twigs, and let cool.

To cool: place spareribs in a roasting pan large enough that the ribs are in one layer, and let cool at room temperature for 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate.

As soon as the liquid & veg are cool enough to handle, put them in a shallow pan to cool to room temperature, for no more than about an hour.

Process the liquid & veg until pureed. You can use a hand blender or a processor.

Pour into a shallow pan, cover and refrigerate.

To serve:

Remove fat from cold sauce.

Reheat the sauce until it's liquefied enough to cover the ribs.

Cover and reheat the ribs in the sauce, for an hour at 350°.

Serve with mashed potatoes, and a simple side dish of root vegetables. Plate the vegetables followed by the meat & sauce.

Don't forget a big glass of wine.

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