



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Wine-Braised Beef

Serves 4-6

The goal was that the main dish be stew-like without being stew. It was going to be served on plates, so it couldn't be too saucy, but we wanted meltingly tender chunks of beef. A cheaper cut of meat so we could serve a crowd was definitely a bonus. It also doesn't hurt that there's no last-minute work and it can be made in advance and actually improves with being stored overnight.

I'm a big fan of Yellowtail's wine for recipes like this. It's cheap but pretty good. I used a Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon blend.

1 tablespoon canola oil
1 (3 to 3½-pound) boneless beef chuck roast, cut into 2-inch cubes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 ounce pancetta, diced into ⅛-inch cubes
1 yellow onion, diced fine
1 medium carrot, diced fine
1 celery stalk, diced fine
3 cloves garlic, minced
1½ cups dry red wine
1½ cups chicken broth
1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes, with juice
1 sprig thyme
2 tablespoons butter, room temperature
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

1. Heat the oil in a 5-quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Pat the meat dry, season it generously with salt and pepper, and arrange the pieces, without touching, in the Dutch oven. (You may need to do this in two batches.) Cook the meat, without stirring or flipping, for 2-3 minutes, until the bottoms are deeply browned. Turn the chunks of meat and brown a second side. Transfer the meat to a plate. Discard any fat in the pan (but leave the cooked-on brown bits).

2. In the same pot over medium heat, cook the pancetta until fat starts to render, 3-5 minutes. Add the onion, carrot, and celery; cook, stirring occasionally, until the edges of the onions start to brown, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic; cook and stir for about one minute. Pour the wine into the pot, scraping up the sticky brown bits on the bottom of the pot. Add the stock, tomatoes with their juice, thyme sprig, and reserved meat back to the pot. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer. Once the liquid simmers, reduce the heat to low, partially cover the pot, and simmer slowly until the meat is tender, about 3 hours.

3. Mix the butter and flour in a small bowl until smooth. Remove the thyme sprig from the pot. Whisk the butter/flour paste into the sauce. Increase the heat to medium to medium-high and simmer, uncovered, until the sauce is thickened. Serve, topping each portion with a sprinkling of parsley.