

BOEUF VIGNERONNE DU BOURGONNE

(Burgundy Winemakers' Beef)

Another wonderful recipe from the vineyards of Burgundy. In January and February, when the vineyards are rimed with ice and the sap is at its lowest level, the winemakers have to go into the vineyards to prune the vines. After a hard day's work, the vigneronnes return home to bathe and bandage their cuts and to warm themselves with this very comforting dish. I have three recipes for Boeuf Vigneronne du Bourgonne, but this one, using a whole bottle of wine, is my favorite.

3 pounds stewing beef, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 bottle dry red wine, burgundy if possible
1 teaspoon thyme
1 bay leaf, deveined
1 carrot, thinly sliced
2 sprigs fresh parsley
12 small white onions
3 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons butter, divided
1 clove garlic, chopped fine
3 shallots, chopped
1 cup beef bouillon
1/2 pound lean bacon, chopped small

Put the beef into a bowl and add sufficient wine to cover it. Add the thyme, bay leaf, carrot and parsley, plus 2 onions, sliced thin. Leave it to marinate for 24 hours.

Remove the beef from the bowl and dab it dry with a muslin cloth, then coat with flour and place in a Dutch oven to brown in 1 tablespoon of butter. Add the garlic, shallots and the remaining butter and stir with a spatula to brown. Strain the marinade in the bowl through a muslin cloth, then add it to the beef with enough bouillon to submerge the beef completely, and then some. In a small frying pan saute the bacon, then, using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to the Dutch oven. Place the remaining onions in the frying pan and brown them in the bacon fat. Add them to the meat, then cover and simmer on a low heat until the meat is tender to the fork, about 2 1/2 hours.

Serves 4-6