

Braised Beef Cheeks

Ingredients:

4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
4 (12oz) beef cheeks, trimmed of excess fat and silver skin
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 medium carrot, finely chopped
½ celery rib, finely chopped
2 tbsp cognac
2 c dry red wine
3 c of tomatoes
1 bay leaf
2 cloves garlic
3 branches of lemon thyme
5 juniper berries
2 pieces of star anise
1 ½ tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper

Directions:

Pre heat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit.

Heat 2 tbsp oil in an ovenproof 6-quart wide heavy pot over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. While oil is heating, pat beef cheeks dry and season with salt and pepper. Brown beef, without crowding, on all sides, about 20 minutes total, and transfer with tongs to a bowl. Pour off fat from pot, then add remaining 2 tbsp oil and cook chopped onion, carrot, and celery over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally until softened, about 10 minutes.

Add cognac to vegetable mixture and flambé with caution, then add wine and scrape up any brown bits. Add all the remaining aromatic ingredients. Increase heat to med high and slowly simmer until liquid is reduced by half, about 10 minutes.

Return beef cheeks (with juices) to pot and add tomatoes with juice, salt, and pepper. Bring to a simmer, then braise, covered, in middle of oven until very tender, about 3 hours.

Chef's Note:

Beef cheeks improve in flavour if made up to two days ahead. Cool uncovered, and then chill, with the surfaces covered with parchment paper or wax paper and a lid on the pot. Remove any solidified fat before reheating.