

The Samuel Fox Country Inn

Comfortable rooms, fine food, real ales and a warm welcome



Braised beef cheeks in red wine with ox-tongue croquettes, violet potatoes & roasted root vegetables in pancetta parcels

Ingredients – serves four

4	beef cheeks	1	bay leaf
100g	sliced pancetta	50ml	dripping
3-4 slices	cooked ox tongue cut approx 0.25cm thick (approx 120g)	2 litre	beef stock (two stock cubes and a dash of Bovril will suffice)
1	medium size onion	500ml	red wine
2	sticks of celery	100ml	port
2	large carrots	100g	bread crumbs
1	large leek	2	eggs
4	violet or black potatoes*		butter, milk and cream (small amounts)
1	large Maris Piper potato		plain flour
1	head of garlic		salt and ground black pepper
1	small bunch of thyme		

*these are both flavoursome and add visual impact to the dish but if you cannot find violet potatoes a firm waxy potato such as Charlotte will do



Method:

1. Trim off any excess fat, skin and sinew from the beef cheeks. Your local butcher will do this for you
2. Wash the root vegetables and peel ready for preparation. Carefully remove the four outer layers of the leek, keeping them intact and soak them in cold water for an hour then rinse and drain. Cut the carrots and celery into rough batons, 10cm long and about 0.5cm thick. Chop up the onions and save with the remaining heart of the leek and trimmings from the carrots and celery in a separate container.
3. Put a large heavy pan on to the stove, pour a little dripping into the pan. Just as the dripping becomes quite hot carefully put the beef cheeks into the pan and brown on both sides. The beef cheeks need to have a dark caramel colour to add a good roasted flavour and colour to the sauce.
4. Remove the beef cheeks and place in a large casserole dish. In the hot pan add the chopped onions, leek heart and root vegetable trimmings (keeping half the carrot back for the purée, see 11) and garlic and fry until brown. Tip the vegetables and dripping into a sieve, discard the dripping and return the vegetables to the pan. Place the pan back on stove and pour in the wine and port and reduce by half. Pour the root vegetable and wine reduction into the casserole and add the stock, bay leaf and thyme. Cover with a lid and cook in the oven at 150°C for approx 4 hours until the beef cheeks are soft and tender. During this time you can bake the Maris Piper potato in the same oven for around 90 minutes until soft and set aside to cool ready to make the croquettes – see step 10.
5. When the beef cheeks are tender leave to cool in the sauce, then remove them from the sauce and place them on a tray. Pass the sauce through a sieve to strain off the vegetables and herbs then put the sauce back onto to the stove and reduce until thick and shiny (remember to skim off any excess scum as the sauce reduces). Place the beef cheeks back into the sauce until required.
6. In the restaurant we cook our own ox tongue by covering with water and simmering in the oven with root vegetables, garlic and thyme such as used elsewhere in this recipe. However, in the interest of simplicity and because a whole ox tongue would far exceed the requirements for serving just four, you may use ready cooked tongue slices from, say a supermarket deli counter. Ask for slices to be cut approx 0.25cm thick. From the slices cut eight discs, using a small pastry cutter which should be set aside until plating up the dish. Chop up the remaining tongue very fine and keep to one side for making the croquettes.
7. Place the violet potatoes into a pan of salted water, bring to the boil and cook until tender. Then drain and remove the skin by scraping the potatoes with a knife. It is easier the scrape off the skin when the potatoes are hot, so wear a pair of rubber gloves.
8. In another deep pan add boiling salted water, which should be kept on the boil ready to blanch the root vegetables. Pour cold water into a bowl and add some ice cubes (this will be used to cool the blanched vegetables and stop the cooking process very quickly.) First blanch the four layers of leek for about 30 seconds and then remove with tongs and plunge into the iced water. Repeat this process with the carrot batons (blanch for two minute and the celery batons (30 seconds). When cold remove all the vegetables from the iced water and place on a dry clean cloth.

9. You can now start to prepare the vegetable parcels. Trim one of the unfolded layers of leek to form a rectangle, approximately 4cm by 12cm and place two pieces of celery and two pieces of carrot on the layer of leek in a neat bundle and roll up tightly. Then take a piece of pancetta and place the leek wrapped vegetables on the end of the strip of pancetta and roll up tightly, tucking in the ends of the pancetta to keep the vegetables together. The pancetta gives a nice crisp texture and smoky flavour to the parcel. Repeat this process three times to make four vegetable parcels in total. These are now ready to be roasted – see 12.
10. Take the baked Maris Piper potato and mash the flesh with a potato masher, add a little butter, salt and pepper, chopped thyme and the chopped tongue. Roll into sausage shapes and cut in to four cylinders approximately 5cm long. In a bowl whisk two eggs and a drop of milk. In another bowl place the flour with a few pinches of salt and in a third bowl pour in the bread crumbs. Now using a fork roll the cylinders of potato in the flour first, then the egg wash and finally the bread crumbs. Place the breaded croquettes on a tray until required.
11. Place a knob of butter in a heavy pan, add the remaining carrot trimmings and fry gently with a pinch of salt until golden and soft; cover with milk and a touch of cream and reduce until thick. Blend in a food blender until shiny and smooth, place the resultant purée into a small sauce pan until required.
12. To make the dish heat up the beef cheeks in the sauce on the hob and add eight tongue discs in readiness for plating up. In a frying pan add some dripping and fry the vegetable parcels and croquettes until golden, then place on a baking tray along with the violet potatoes. Place the tray in the oven at 180°C for five minutes.
13. On warm plates spoon the carrot purée on first and spread it over one half of the plate. Place the beef cheek on the other half of the plate and then remove the vegetable parcels and croquettes from the oven. Place the vegetable parcel at the bottom and the croquette at the top of the plate. Break up the violet potatoes into rough pieces and season then place roughly on top of the carrot purée. Place a couple of discs of tongue on each plate in the spaces then cover the beef cheek in some of the sauce.
14. For a more professional presentation, as shown in the photograph, add a garnish of baby carrots and sprinkle a herb crust made by blitzing some stale bread with parsley leaves. Enjoy with a lovely glass of red wine!