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Slow-Cooked Beef Bourguignon

Serves 8-10

The term “Bourguignon” refers to “in the style of Burgundy,” a region in the east-central area of France and applied to a number of things. In this situation, the term is connected with beef. Inexpensive cuts are slow-cooked for hours with a classic combination of aromatics and distinctive herbs while bathed in deeply-flavored red wine. The layered flavors are enhanced with a generous helping of sautéed mushrooms toward the end of cooking. It’s a rich dish that satisfies any hunger.

1 lb. thick-cut bacon, cut into a large dice
5 lbs. beef chuck roast, trimmed, cut into 1- to 1.5-inch chunks
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
8 oz. baby carrots, halved
2 medium, yellow onions, sliced, half moons
6 cloves garlic, crushed
1 bottle red wine
2 cups beef broth
3 tablespoons tomato paste
3 sprigs fresh thyme, (about 1-1/2 tsp), plus more for garnishing
2 bay leaves
1/2 lb. pearl onions, fresh or frozen
4 tablespoons butter, divided
2 lb. white button mushrooms, trimmed, halved
1/4 cup flour

Served with Buttered Noodles:

1 lb. flat egg noodles
2 tablespoons butter
Minced parsley for garnish (optional)

Directions:

1. In a large sauté pan, fry the diced pieces of bacon over medium heat until all the fat is rendered and the bacon pieces become crispy. Remove the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. Reserve the bacon fat by pouring in a heat-tempered bowl or cup.

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2. Toss the beef chucks with salt and pepper. Increase the heat on the sauté pan, add a table-spoon of the bacon fat and sear a few beef pieces turning once until each side has browned, about 1-2 minutes per side. Transfer the seared pieces to the slow cooker. Do not crowd the pan, but rather, work in batches. Between each searing, deglaze the pan by adding 1/2 cup of the beef broth. Scrape up the brown bits as the pan deglazes. Pour the broth into the slow cooker. Add more bacon fat, and sear the next batch of beef chunks until all pieces are seared, deglaze and repeat for the next batch.

3. Add the carrots, onions, and garlic to the slow cooker; toss to distribute evenly. Add one bottle of red wine – a full-bodied red blend, or a Pinot Noir.

4. Whisk together the beef broth and tomato paste until combined. Add to the slow cooker.

5. Add the thyme, bay leaves, and pearl onions to the slow cooker. Stir to submerge the herbs.

6. Cook on low for 8 hours, or on high for 4 hours.

7. An hour prior to completion, sauté the mushrooms in a sauté pan with 2 tablespoons of the butter and cook until all liquid steams away. Add the sautéed mushrooms to the slow cooker and stir to distribute. Add the reserved bacon pieces.

8. With the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, mix with the flour using a fork to mash together. Form rough balls of the mixture. Add them to the slow cooker. The butter-coated grains of flour (*beurre manié*) will thicken the cooking liquids into a lovely gravy while avoiding any clumping.

9. Serve the beef bourguignon with noodles, a classic offering: cook the noodles to the *al dente* stage. Drain and toss with butter until well-coated. Serve the beef over the noodles. Garnish generously with minced parsley.