

## LA DAUBE DE BOEUF PROVENÇAL PROVENÇAL MEAT AND WINE STEW

There must be scores of different recipes for daubes in Provence alone, as well as all those which have been borrowed from Provence by other regions, for a daube of beef is essentially a country housewife's dish. In some daubes the meat is cut up, in others it is cooked in the piece; what goes in apart from the meat is largely a question of what is available, and the way it is served is again a question of local taste.

This is an easy recipe, but it has all the rich savour of these slowly-cooked wine-flavored stews. The pot to cook it in may be earthenware, cast iron, or a copper or aluminum oven pot of about 2 pints capacity, wide rather than deep.

The ingredients are 2 lb. of top rump of beef, about 6 oz. of unsmoked streaky bacon or salt pork, about 3 oz. of fresh pork rinds, 2 onions, 2 carrots, 2 tomatoes, 2 cloves of garlic, a bouquet of thyme, bayleaf, parsley and a little strip of orange peel, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, a glass (4 fl. oz.) of red wine, seasoning.

Have the meat cut into squares about half the size of a postcard and about 1/2 inch thick. Buy the bacon or salt pork in the piece and cut into small cubes.

Scrape and slice the carrots on the cross; peel and slice the onions. Cut the rinds, which should have hardly any fat adhering to them and are there to give body as well as savour to the stew, into little squares. Skin and slice the tomatoes.

In the bottom of the pot put the olive oil, then the bacon, then the vegetables and half the pork rinds. Arrange the meat carefully on top, the slices overlapping each other. Bury the garlic cloves, flattened with a knife, and the bouquet, in the center. Cover with the rest of the pork rinds. With the pan uncovered, start the cooking on a moderate heat on top of the stove.

After about 10 minutes, put the wine into another saucepan; bring it to a fast boil; set light to it; rotate the pan so that the flames spread. When they have died down pour the wine bubbling over the meat. Cover the pot with greaseproof paper or foil, and a well-fitting lid. Transfer to a very slow over, Gas No. 1, 290 deg. F., and leave for 2 1/2 hours.

To serve, arrange the meat with the bacon and the little pieces of rind on a hot dish; pour off some of the fat from the sauce, extract the bouquet, and pour the sauce around the meat. If you can, keep the dish hot over a spirit lamp after it is brought to table. At the serving stage, a *persillade* of finely-chopped garlic and parsley, with perhaps an anchovy and a few capers, can be sprinkled over the top. Or stoned black olives can be added to the stew half an hour before the end of the cooking time.

Although in Italy pasta is never served with a meat dish, in Provence it quite often is. The cooked and drained noodles, or whatever pasta you have chosen, are mixed with some of the gravy from the stew, and in this case the fat is not removed from the gravy, because it lubricates the pasta. Sometimes this *macoranade*, as it is called, is served first, to be followed by the meat.

Nowadays, since rice has been successfully cultivated in the reclaimed areas of the Camargue, it also quite usual to find a dish of rice, often flavored with saffron, served with a meat stew.

The daube is a useful dish for those who have to get a dinner ready when they get home from the office. It can be cooked for 1 1/2 hours the previous evening and finished on the night itself. Provided they have not been

overcooked to start with, these beef and wine stews are all the better for a second or even third heating up. The amounts I have given are the smallest quantities in which it is worth cooking such a stew, but of course they can be doubled or even trebled for a large party; if the meat is piled up in layers in a deep pan it will naturally need longer cooking than if it is spread out in a shallow one.

- *French Provincial Cooking*, Elizabeth David