

BRAISED OXTAIL

Oxtail is inclined to be a fatty meat, but if cooked one or two days before it is going to be eaten, so that the fat can settle and be lifted, it's one of the most nourishing and inexpensive winter meals to ward off the cold east winds that whip through the Suffolk village where I live.

Serves 6.

Ingredients:

2 oxtails	35g (1½ ozs) beef dripping
1 large onion	2 small turnips
350g (12 ozs) carrots	Bouquet garni
2 Bay leaves	Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon lemon juice	1 bottle red wine or beef
4 peeled tomatoes (optional)	stock cube made up to
	600ml (1 pint)

Method:

Cut up oxtail and coat in seasoned flour. Melt good beef dripping in a large pan and fry oxtails for about 5 minutes, then set aside in a large fireproof casserole. Fry onions in dripping left in pan and then add to oxtails. Pour wine or beef stock over oxtails and bring to the boil. Add salt, pepper, Bay leaves and bouquet garni for 1½ - 2 hours. Then strain off the liquid into a large bowl and leave to cool, lift off as much fat as you can, and pour remaining liquid over oxtail. Add peeled and sliced carrots and turnips to oxtail, also add lemon juice, bring to the boil, then cover and simmer in preheated oven 140C, 275F, Gas Mark 1 for 2 hours. Then add peeled tomatoes and simmer for a further 25 minutes. Serve in the casserole in which the oxtail was cooked, no further vegetables are needed, as you can mop up juices with chunks of crusty bread, or make some dumplings and add to the casserole during the last 25 minutes of cooking.

This recipe was taken from my cookbook 'Step Into My Kitchen through The year'. Evelyn Curtis

PARSLEY AND HORSERADISH DUMPLINGS

If you aren't too keen on horseradish, these dumplings are equally as good with chopped parsley and a generous pinch of salt and pepper.

Ingredients:

110g (4 ozs) self-raising flour	50g (2 ozs) shredded vegetable suet
1 teaspoon hot ready chopped horseradish	4-5 tablespoons cold water
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley	

Method:

Mix flour & suet, adding horseradish and chopped parsley with water. Divide the dough into 6-8 balls, shaping with floured hands. Place on top of your cooked oxtail, cover with lid and cook for 20-25 minutes. Serve piping hot.

