BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

Chef Thomas Keller / Chapter Thirteen

MASTERCLASS

BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

"In the winter, I think about food transformation. And right now, we're going to do one of my favorites, which is beef short ribs."

CHAPTER REVIEW

Chef Keller's favorite time of year to cook is winter, when his thoughts turn to comforting braised dishes. Here he braises boneless beef short ribs in red wine, a time-intensive recipe that is worth the patience it requires. Chef Keller starts this dish two days in advance.

As always, use the best quality beef you can find, and only cook with wine that you'd want to drink. Always cook off the alcohol first—or the alcohol will begin to cook your meat. This recipe calls for a mirepoix, which, like a matignon, is a medley of diced vegetables. The difference, Chef Keller explains, is that a mirepoix is ultimately meant to be discarded, not eaten.

After using it to marinate the short ribs, Chef Keller clarifies the red wine marinade—which results in a brighter, purer flavor—and braises the short ribs in it. Finally, he reduces the red wine sauce and strains it, making a glaze for the short ribs.

Chef Keller also demonstrates how to make a cartouche, a parchment paper cover that allows for some evaporation during braising while keeping the meat submerged. Unlike matignon cooking, which aims to retain the liquid that the meat is cooked in, braising reduces the liquid via evaporation during the slow cooking process.

At the satisfying end of a three-day process, Chef Keller serves these short ribs with creamy polenta and mushroom conserva as an earthy complement.

PREP & COOK TIMELINE

Day 1

- Make marinade
  Bring short ribs to temperature
- Marinate
  8 to 12 hours

Day 2

- Clarify marinade (now sauce base)
  Sear short rib portions
- Transfer to oven
  Braise for 3 hours
- Chill overnight in
  braising liquid

Day 3

- Remove short ribs
  from braising liquid
- Simmer and strain
  braising liquid
- Add short ribs to sauté pan
  Add 1/3 liquid
- Baste and
  glaze short ribs
- Finish sauce
  with butter
- Plate and serve

BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

PROTEIN

FOR THE MARINADE

Mise en place

Ingredients

1 bottle red wine
75 grams carrots, cut into a 1-inch dice
75 grams leeks, cut into 1-inch dice
75 grams onions, cut into a 1-inch dice
3 garlic cloves, smashed
1 bouquet garni (ingredients below)

FOR THE BOUQUET GARNI

10 Italian parsley sprigs
2 thyme sprigs
1 bay leaf
Peppercorns

Equipment

Sauce pot
Blowtorch (or barbeque lighter)
1-gallon sealable plastic bag
6-quart storage container

METHOD

Bring the red wine to a simmer in a sauce pot over low heat. Add the mirepoix and bouquet garni. Use a blowtorch to burn off the alcohol. (If you don't have access to a blowtorch, you can use a barbeque lighter as an alternative.) Continue to simmer the marinade until the flame from the alcohol goes out; continue until you no longer smell hot alcohol aroma. Turn off the heat and transfer the marinade to a container lined with a sealable plastic bag and chill completely.

BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

PROTEIN

FOR THE SHORT RIBS

Mise en place

Ingredients

6 pieces boneless short ribs, 7 oz each / 210 grams per portion*
Canola oil, for browning meat
Kosher salt
All-purpose flour
700 grams roasted veal stock**
700 grams light chicken stock**
Butter
Freshly cracked pepper
Sel gris
Chives, for garnish

**Ingredient note:* Talk to your butcher if you want to get a short rib plate, like Chef Keller uses in the video lesson. Give your butcher the exact code for the cut, 123D short rib, which is about 3 pounds, untrimmed. In the video, the meat has already been trimmed of extraneous fat and sinew—you can ask your butcher to do this. If you can't source this cut, you can buy short ribs on the bone and trim it off the bone. The technique is applicable regardless of portion size.

***Ingredient note:* Chef Keller teaches you how to make roasted veal stock in Chapter 16: Roasted Veal Stock and chicken stock in Chapter 17: Light Chicken Stock. Also note that these quantities can change depending on the size and shape of your cooking vessel. What's important is that you completely cover the meat. Adjust to ensure that your meat is submerged.

METHOD

DAY 1:

Trim the excess fat from the meat and cut each piece against the grain into approximately six 7-ounce portions. If you have small boneless short ribs, there is no need to split them in half. Reserve any trimmings to make ground beef. Place the meat in the plastic bag-lined container with the chilled marinade and refrigerate for 12 to 16 hours.

DAY 2:

Preheat the oven to 275°F. Remove the meat and the bouquet garni from the marinade. Transfer the marinade (including the mirepoix) into a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Clarify the liquid by skimming off the impurities that rise to the top. When thoroughly clarified, the marinade will return to the vibrant color of the wine. Remove from heat.

Heat ¼ inch of canola oil in a sauté pan over high heat. Season both sides of each piece of meat with salt and dredge in flour, patting off the excess. When the oil is shimmering, add the meat and cook for 2 to 3 minutes on all sides. Because of the red wine, when the meat is properly browned it will be dark brown with a purple tint rather the golden brown we're most familiar with. When all sides have browned, transfer to a paper towel-lined rack.

Pour off the excess oil from the pan, leaving the bits stuck to the bottom of the pan for deglazing.* Return to heat and add the clarified marinade. Add the short ribs, veal stock, light chicken stock, and bouquet garni. The meat should be covered with liquid; if it's not, add more veal and chicken stock as necessary.

Bring the liquid to a simmer on the stove. Cover with a cartouche—a parchment paper lid with a hole in the middle—transfer to the oven, and braise for about 3 hours,

BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

Equipment

Cutting board
Knife
Bowl
Ladle
Peltex spatula
Sheet pans lined with paper towels
12-inch sauté pan
Parchment paper
Kitchen shears
Cake tester
Large kitchen spoon
13-by-9-inch ceramic baking dish
Plastic wrap
3-quart saucepan
Chinois
5-quart sauté pan
Spoon

or until the meat is so tender that a cake tester slides right through, as if it were butter. (Note that you should use the cake tester to determine doneness, the time is only a guideline.) Transfer the meat to a ceramic baking dish and carefully pour the cooking liquid over the meat. Cover with the cartouche and let cool; then cover with plastic wrap and let rest overnight in the refrigerator.

DAY 3

Remove the meat from the baking dish and transfer the remaining braising liquid to a sauce pot. Bring to a simmer. Strain the liquid through a chinois, tapping the edge of the chinois with a spoon to help the liquid through. Discard the remnants of the mirepoix.

Place the meat into a saute pan. Add a third of the strained braising liquid and add enough light chicken stock to slightly reduce the viscosity, starting with a couple of ounces.** Bring the liquid to a simmer, basting the meat and allowing the sauce to glaze it. Reduce until it is a sauce consistency. Finish the sauce with butter for a velvety texture.

****Note:*** Deglazing is the process of removing and dissolving the bits that stick to the bottom of the pan by adding liquid.

*****Note:*** The amount you need to use is based on the surface area of your pan. The wider your pan, the more you need to add. The goal is to have enough liquid in the pan to heat the short rib through and glaze it, but without having a ton of liquid left. You don't want the meat to be sitting in a soup, but you also don't want the liquid to turn to syrup and have a cold center.

If not serving immediately, remove the pan from the heat and cover the meat with a lid or another cartouche. Keep in a warm spot or in a 300°F oven until ready to serve, or for up to 45 minutes.

To plate and serve as Chef Keller does, follow the additional recipes on the following pages.

BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

ACCOMPANIMENTS

FOR THE MUSHROOM CONSERVA

Mise en place

Ingredients

1 kilogram assorted mushrooms of your choice
Extra virgin olive oil, enough to cover mushrooms in the pot
2 bay leaves
4 thyme sprigs
1 rosemary sprig
½ gram Piment d'Espelette (or chile flakes)
45 grams sherry vinegar
10 grams kosher salt

Equipment

Heavy pot
Whisk
Rubber spatula
Glass jar with lid, for storage

METHOD

Clean the mushrooms and cut them into bite-sized pieces. Combine the olive oil, herbs, and chile flakes. Heat the oil to 170°F, add the mushrooms and stir. Bring the temperature back to 170°F. Cook for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the vinegar and salt. Allow to steep for 45 minutes. Transfer to clean covered storage container. Store in the fridge for up to 1 week.

FOR THE POLENTA

Mise en place

Ingredients

700 grams chicken stock or vegetable stock
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
10 grams kosher salt
300 grams polenta, Moretti brand
300 grams whole milk
150 grams unsalted butter, cubed
Extra virgin olive oil, to finish

Equipment

Whisk
Saucepot

METHOD

Combine the stock, garlic, and kosher salt in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour in the polenta in a stream and cook over low heat, whisking often, for 17 to 20 minutes, until the polenta is quite dry and coats the bottom of the pan. The moisture must evaporate, because it will be replaced with fat; otherwise, the texture could be gummy.

Meanwhile, warm the milk in a small saucepan.

Increase the heat under the polenta to medium and stir in butter. Add the milk about one quarter at a time, letting the polenta absorb it each time before adding more. Season to taste with kosher salt if needed. Adjust butter as needed.

Spoon polenta into your serving dish, top with short ribs, and garnish with freshly cracked black pepper, sel gris, and chives. Serve the mushroom conserva alongside.

BRAISING: RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS

LEARN MORE

Many other proteins lend themselves beautifully to this braising technique, including beef cheeks, lamb and veal shanks, and pork shoulder. You can also make this recipe with chicken for a result similar to the preparation in coq au vin. If you eliminate the step of searing the meat, you can apply this technique to veal to make blanquette de veau on page 226 of *Bouchon*. To learn the technique for the sauce used in blanquette de veau, see Chapter 20: Chicken Velouté.

Chef Keller refers to the cut of meat for this dish as a top plate, but your local butcher might use slightly different language. To help you communicate the specific cut you are looking for, refer to the Meat Buyer's Guide, the industry standard created by the North American Meat Processors Association.