

Brasato al Barolo

With Braised Vegetables & Parmigiano Polenta

Serves 6

- 4 – 5 pound chuck roast
- 1 – 1 ½ bottles of Barolo (the leftover half makes for a good way to pass the cooking time)
- 1 cup of beef or vegetable stock
- 1 cup of flour (for dredging)
- 4 carrots (or six-to-eight baby carrots)
- 3 stalks of celery (halved and cut into slices)
- 2 onions (quartered)
- 1 cup dried porcini mushrooms
- 8 cloves of garlic (whole)
- 2 sprigs of rosemary
- 1 sprig thyme (leaves only, woody stem removed)
- 1 sprig of sage (stem removed)
- 8 whole peppercorns
- 1 tbsp Olive oil
- 2 tbsp whole butter



Note: In order to not confuse things, I may refer to the meat as a roast (even though this is a braise) throughout the recipe. Also, when preparing your vegetables, remember that you will be serving them later, so be sure to make clean, measured cuts.

The Preparation

1. Preheat your oven to 250 degrees and allow the chuck roast to rest out of the refrigerator for one hour so that it comes up to room temperature. Once ready, season the roast liberally with salt on all sides and dredge in flour. Shake off any excess flour before browning. Over a medium-high flame, place a large gauge steel-roasting dish (you can also use a stovetop safe earthenware vessel or Dutch oven). Add just enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan and, when heated through, add the roast. Sear the roast on all sides (about two minutes on each side).



2. Once seared, move the roast to a platter off the stove. Add one tablespoon of olive oil to the pan. Next, add the carrots, celery, onions, mushrooms and garlic to the pan with a pinch of salt. Stir to coat the vegetables in oil. Next, add the sage, thyme, porcini mushrooms, peppercorns and rosemary, and stir gently to combine. Once the vegetables have begun to take on color, remove them to a platter on the side, then place the roast back into the pan, followed immediately by putting the vegetables back in around it. Then begin to pour the wine into the pan. Add enough beef stock to bring the liquid at least ¾ of the way to the top of the roast. Allow this mixture to come to a simmer, and cover lightly with a piece of aluminum foil. Place the pan into the center of your oven.



3. The meat should braise for three hours like this. However, it's important to turn the meat over each hour in order to allow a steady combination of moist and dry heat to permeate it. After turning the meat on the third hour, insert a thermometer into the center. You are looking for an internal temperature of 170 – 175 degrees.



4. Once the desired temperature has been reached, remove the roast from the pan and allow it to rest on a platter. Next, strain the cooking liquid from the vegetables, being careful not to damage them. Set the vegetables aside, keeping them warm in your oven, set at 200 degrees.



If serving with polenta, this would be the time to start boiling your water. (See below for recipe.)

5. Next, skim any excess fat from the top of the cooking liquid, pour it into a wide pan, and place over medium heat. The idea is to reduce the cooking liquid into a saucy consistency. Your own preferences are important here; I like to reduce the sauce to a thick consistency, but you may prefer it a little looser. Once done, remove from the heat and add two tablespoons of whole butter (this adds a beautiful sheen and richness to the sauce). Stir to incorporate fully and season with salt and pepper to taste.



6. If you are serving it immediately, slice the roast and submerge the slices in the reduced sauce, then place over low heat for five minutes. To plate, I like to serve this dish with a loose Parmigiano polenta and a sprig of rosemary. Serve and enjoy.



7. Alternatively, you can slice the roast, submerge it in the sauce and refrigerate until ready. Once ready, heat the sauce and add the slices back into the sauce once it's warmed. Cook over low flame for five to ten minutes and serve.

Parmigiano Polenta

Polenta is a simple preparation, and there are often cooking instructions on any product that you buy. However, my simple ratio that works for most products is below.

- 4 cups water
- 1 cup polenta
- 2 tbs of sweet butter
- 1 cup of grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- A healthy pinch of salt and cracked pepper



Bring the water to a boil. Slowly whisk the polenta into the water and then reduce to a simmer.. Cook over low heat for 30 minutes, stirring every five minutes. When the 30 minutes are up, stir in your sweet butter and grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

Polenta should be plated served immediately as it hardens and thickens quickly.