

TOSELAND PHEASANT CASSEROLE WITH BLACK CHERRIES



All game seems to respond well to a bit of sweetness in the mix, whether you roast or casserole it. For this recipe I used a brace of fully-feathered pheasants – breasts and bits of leg. You may want to reduce quantities of ingredients, if you are only using shop-bought breasts of one or two pheasants.

Ingredients

Pheasant meat boned and chopped
Good glug of olive oil
6 Juniper berries – ground
6 entire cloves
3 broken bay leaves
1 tsp grated nutmeg
Ground black pepper - generous amount
2” piece of root ginger – finely chopped

4 cloves of garlic – finely chopped
2-4 sticks of celery – finely chopped
1-2 onions – finely chopped
6 or 7 chestnut mushrooms
1 Chicken stock jelly or cube
Tin of black cherries in syrup
At least, one full, large glass of red wine
Water to cover/top up
Zest and juice from some small citrus fruit – I used a clementine but you could use a tangerine, or a lemon, or half an orange etc. (The zest really makes a difference, so that the resulting stew is both sweet, savoury and sparky, as well being rich).

Instructions

Fry the celery and onions in the olive oil, along with the cloves, crushed juniper berries and black pepper, until the vegetables begin to brown;

Add the pheasant meat and stir until it starts to change colour;

Add the wine, water to cover, bay leaves, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, stock cube or jelly, syrup from tin of black cherries, zest and juice from chosen citrus fruit, and chopped mushrooms, then bring to the boil, and turn down to simmer for 3-4 hours.

When the meat is tender and the gravy suitably reduced, add the reserved black cherries;

Warm up and serve.

Serving Suggestion: Fried, cubed potatoes in olive oil with fresh rosemary, and buttered sweetcorn and peas – a slosh of sour cream on top might also be nice for those who are not dieting.

Pat Dillon.