

Braised pork cheek, onion soup, wild garlic and soda bread

Ingredients

For the pork cheeks

- dash olive oil
- 4 pork cheeks, excess fat removed
- 1 carrot, roughly chopped
- 1 celery stick, roughly chopped
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 banana shallot, cut in half
- 500ml/18fl oz beef stock
- 1 bouquet garni
- 50g/1¾oz butter

For the onion soup

- dash oil
- 5 white onions, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- few sprigs thyme
- 50g/1¾oz butter
- 175ml/6fl oz white wine
- 400ml/14fl oz milk

- 50ml/2fl oz cream

For the porter soda bread

- 50g/1¾oz butter, plus extra for greasing
- 300g/10½oz wholemeal flour
- 100g/3½oz plain flour
- pinch salt
- 1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp light brown sugar
- 30g/1oz pumpkin seeds
- 50g/1¾oz porridge oats
- 100g/3½ oz treacle
- 250ml/9fl oz porter
- 230ml/8¼fl oz milk

To serve

- handful wild garlic leaves, roughly chopped



Method

1. To make the pork cheeks, preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas 4.
2. Put a large frying pan with oil over a medium-high heat and brown the pork cheeks on both sides.
3. Once coloured, remove the cheeks from the pan and add the chopped vegetables.
4. Cook for 3 minutes, then return the pork cheeks to the pan along with the stock and bouquet garni.
5. Cover the pan with a lid or kitchen foil and cook in the oven for 1½ hours.
6. Once cooked, remove from the oven, lift the pork cheeks out of the liquid and set aside in a warm place. Strain and reserve the sauce for later, discarding the vegetables.
7. To make the onion soup, place a heavy-based pan on a medium heat. Add the oil, then add the onions and a good pinch of salt.
8. Cook for 10 minutes, then add the chopped garlic, thyme and butter and continue cooking for another 10 minutes. Remove a couple of tablespoons of onions from the pan and set aside for garnish.
9. Turn the heat up and add the white wine. Cook until all the liquid has reduced, then add the milk and simmer for another 10 minutes.
10. Pour in the cream. Remove from the heat and blend using a hand blender. Pass through a sieve and keep warm.

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11. For the soda bread, increase the oven temperature to 190°C/170°C Fan/Gas 5 and grease a 1.8kg/4lb loaf tin with butter.
12. Mix all of the dry ingredients in a bowl – the two flours, salt, bicarbonate of soda, light brown sugar and most of the pumpkin seeds and porridge oats. Reserve about a teaspoon of the seeds and oats for the top of the soda bread.
13. Rub the butter into the dry ingredients, then add the treacle, porter and milk and mix really well until the batter has come together. P
14. lace the dough into the pre-buttered loaf tin, top with the reserved oats and seeds and place in the oven for 45–55 minutes. The loaf is cooked when a knife inserted into the middle of the loaf comes out clean.
15. Add the butter to the reserved sauce along with the cooked pork cheeks. Warm the pork cheeks in the sauce, whilst spooning the sauce over the pork cheeks to glaze them.
16. To serve, place some of the reserved onions in the bottom of your serving bowls. Spoon in the onion soup, then top with the glazed pork cheeks and the wild garlic leaves.
17. Serve the soda bread on the side.

Notes