

Faisan au Vin Rouge

This is a minor adaptation of a recipe from *Supercook* and is my favourite #saucey# recipe for pheasant. First class pheasant are very good plain roasted but older or less well shot birds benefit from different preparation and presentation. Here they are braised in red wine which then goes to make a wonderfully flavoured sauce, though somewhat strangely coloured when the cream is added. The sauce is so good, I like to serve mashed potato to soak it up.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	15 mins
cooking time:	40 mins

Ingredients

2 pheasants
2 medium onions, finely chopped
2 oz unsalted butter
1 tbs vegetable oil
1 bottle full red wine (eg Fitou)
1 bay leaf
4 oz mushrooms, thinly sliced
4 slices streaky bacon
5 fl oz double cream
2 ozs beurre manié
salt and pepper

Method

Clean and dry the pheasants, season them inside with salt and pepper and place half of the chopped onions in their cavities. Brown the birds evenly in a large frying pan over moderately high heat (6 - 8 minutes) with the butter and oil mixed. Transfer them to a flameproof casserole (an oval one is ideal).

Fry the remaining onion, stirring occasionally, until it is lightly browned. Add the wine, increase the heat to high and, stirring constantly, bring to the boil. Add some salt and pepper (sparingly at this stage), the bay leaf and the mushrooms. Cook this over moderate heat for 5 minutes.

Cover the breasts of the pheasants with the bacon slices and add the wine mixture. Bring the casserole to simmering point and then reduce the heat to low, cover it and braise the pheasants for 45 minutes or so until they are tender. Remove and discard the bacon. Transfer the pheasants to a serving dish and keep them warm while finishing the sauce.

Strain the braising liquid back into the frying pan, increase the heat to high and reduce the liquid by half. (While this is happening is a good time to cut the pheasants into serving pieces.) Reduce the heat to moderate and add the beurre manié a piece at a time, stirring constantly, until the sauce reaches the desired consistency. Add the double cream (be prepared for a slightly odd colour at this point!) and cook for a further 2 - 3 minutes. Do not let the sauce boil. Adjust the seasoning to taste. Pour some sauce over the pheasant pieces and serve the rest in a sauce boat.