

Hasenpfeffer

The classic germanic hare stew taken from *French Regional Cookery - Alsace*, or so I thought. (Well, Alsace does suffer from a French/German identity crisis.) Before I'd cooked this, given my basic knowledge of German, I thought that the *pfeffer* part of the name might imply that it were a little peppery. It seems not, more's the pity. Apparently, *pfeffer* also refers to thickening a dish with blood, just as in the very English jugged hare. Somewhat disappointingly, this might as well be called *lièvre au vin* or *lièvre Bourguignon*, for it closely resembles both. It does taste good, nonthemore for that.

Planning

serves:	6
prep time:	3½ hrs
cooking time:	3 hrs

Ingredients

225 g green bacon, diced
1¼ kg hare, jointed, blood & liver reserved
salt & pepper
1 tsp dried thyme
1 bay leaf
3 onions, sliced
4 tbs olive oil
2 tbs Marc d'Alsace or brandy
50 g butter
18 small onions, peeled
18 button mushrooms, wiped
1 clove garlic
25 g plain flour
350 ml red wine
350 ml game or beef stock
bouquet garni
5 tbs single cream
parsley sprigs for garnish

Method

Put the hare into a bowl and season with the salt, pepper and thyme. Add the bay leaf and one of the sliced onions. Combine the oil and Marc d'Alsace or brandy, and pour it over the hare. Turn the joints until well coated and set aside to marinate for 3 hrs.

Meanwhile, blanch the bacon in boiling water for a minute then drain and dry it. Melt half the butter in a frying pan and fry the bacon until golden. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve. Now add the baby onions to the butter and fry for 5 minutes to colour them slightly. Remove and reserve. Similarly, fry the mushrooms in the butter for 2 mins, remove and reserve.

Melt the remaining butter in the frying pan and add the last two sliced onions and crushed garlic. Fry for 4 - 5 mins until golden. Add the flour and fry gently until golden, stirring constantly.

Drain the hare, reserving the marinade, and pat the joints dry with kitchen paper. Add the hare to the roux and cook, stirring constantly, until browned. Pour over the red wine and stock and stir thoroughly before adding the bouquet garni. Bring to the boil, lower the heat and simmer gently for 1½ hours until tender.

Transfer the hare to a flameproof casserole and add the reserve bacon, baby onions and mushrooms. Now add the reserved marinade to the pan in which the hare was browned, stir well to deglaze and strain the contents into the casserole. Cover the casserole and cook in a preheated oven at 175°C, gas mark 4 for 1 hour. 10 mins before the end, chop the reserved liver, stir it into the casserole and continue cooking.

Remove the casserole from the oven and place it over moderate heat. Mix the reserved blood with the cream and stir it into the casserole. Cook gently for about 5 mins, stirring all the time and be careful not to let it boil or it will curdle!

Serve the hasenpfeffer garnished with parsley sprigs and

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accompanied by noodles.