



Casserole of Beef with Pickled Walnuts and Prunes

The sharpness of the pickled walnuts compliments the flavour of the beef, the prunes are a surprisingly delicious complimentary flavour to both. Can be made a day or 2 in advance, also freezes well after the first cooking.

Serves 6

1.25 kg best stewing beef, trimmed and cut into cubes about 2.5 cm in size

2 tbsp plain flour sieved with 1/2 tsp salt and plenty of ground black pepper

3-4 tbsp sunflower oil

2 onions, skinned and finely sliced

1 garlic clove, skinned and finely chopped

850 ml beef stock and 140ml red wine

Contents of 1 x 390g jar of pickled walnuts, drained of their preserving liquid, and the walnuts chopped

112g pitted prunes, chopped

Toss the cut up meat in the seasoned flour. Heat the oil in a heavy casserole and brown the floured pieces of meat, a small amount at a time, removing the meat as it browns to a warm dish.

When all the meat has browned, lower the heat a bit under the casserole and add the sliced onions, cooking them until they are soft and transparent looking.

When the onions are cooked, add the chopped garlic, replace the browned meat in the casserole, stir in the stock and wine, the chopped pickled walnuts and prunes. Stir until the liquid comes to simmering point, then cover the casserole with its lid and cook in a moderate oven, 350f/180c/Gas Mark 4, for 45 minutes. Take it out of the oven and let it cool completely before storing the casserole in the fridge.

Before serving, take it out of the fridge and into room temperature for an hour, then re-cook it in a moderate oven, as above, for a further 45 minutes - stick a fork into a piece of meat to check that it is tender.

By cooking it twice, the flavour is so much better than if it has had only one cooking.

From: The Claire Macdonald Cookbook