

COQ AU VIN

BY LEXUS CULINARY MASTER LUDO LEFEBVRE

AN EARTHY FRENCH STAPLE THAT WILL COMFORT GUESTS, WITH TENDER CHICKEN, BACON AND MUSHROOM

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bottle Côtes du Rhône (or other fruity red wine)
- 1 Onion, Peeled and Diced
- 1 Carrot, Peeled and Diced
- 1 teaspoon Sea Salt or Kosher Salt
- 1 teaspoon Freshly Ground Black Pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon Ground Cloves
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 10 sprigs Thyme
- 1 Large Chicken, Cut into 6 Pieces (2 legs, 2 thighs, 2 breasts cut crosswise with the wings attached)
- 3 tablespoon Olive Oil
- 2 tablespoon Unsalted Butter
- 1½ cup Diced Thick-Cut Smoked Bacon
- 8 ounces Large Mushrooms, Sliced in Half
- 1 tablespoon All-Purpose Flour
- 16 Pearl Onions, Peeled (see Note)
- ¾ cup Water
- 1 tablespoon Red Wine Vinegar
- 1½ tablespoon Unsweetened Cocoa Powder

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large, wide bowl, mix the wine, onion, carrot, 1 teaspoon of salt, the pepper, cloves, bay leaves and thyme. Add the chicken pieces and press down to submerge. Marinate in the refrigerator for 1-2 days, turning the pieces once or twice during that time.
2. Remove the chicken from the marinade and blot it dry with paper towels. Strain the marinade through a fine mesh sieve set over a bowl, saving the vegetables and herbs, as well as the wine.
3. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and 1 tablespoon of the butter in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Cook the chicken pieces in a single layer until dark brown on one side, about 5 minutes; turn and cook the other side, about 5 minutes more. If all the chicken pieces won't fit in a single layer with a reasonable amount of space between them, cook them in batches. (If you have the backbone of the chicken, add that too, since it will add a lot of flavor to the juices later.) Transfer the pieces to a plate as they are done.
4. In the same pot, fry the bacon along with the mushrooms until the bacon is crisp. If browned bits stick to the bottom of the pot, add a splash of the red wine marinade and scrape the flavorful dark bits into the mixture.

DIRECTIONS (continued)

5. Add the drained vegetables and herbs from the marinade to the pot and cook until the vegetables are tender. Stir the flour into the vegetables. Add the chicken back to the pot along with the strained wine, which should come up almost to the top of the chicken pieces. If not, add a bit of water or some more red wine. Cover and let the chicken simmer over medium heat for 1 hour.
6. While the chicken is cooking, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a saucepan. When the butter is melted, add the pearl onions, season with salt and cook until brown, about 12 minutes. Pour the water into the saucepan, along with the vinegar, and season with more salt. Cover the pan and simmer for about 40 minutes, until the onions are tender. Add them to the chicken, along with any cooking liquid.
7. In a small bowl, make a slurry with the cocoa powder and about 1/3 cup (80 ml) of the warm cooking liquid from the pot. Stir it into the chicken, letting it mix into the sauce. Cook for a few more minutes to heat everything through. You can pluck out the thyme sprigs, if you wish, before serving, although the French would just leave them in.

NOTE

To peel the onions, drop them in a pot of boiling water and let simmer for about 5 minutes. Drain them and let cool. Trim the ends off each one, and then slip off the skins.

ABOUT THE CHEF

One of Los Angeles' most influential chefs, Chef Ludo Lefebvre is known for his inventive, refined cooking. In addition to being named one of the 50 greatest chefs in the world by Relais & Châteaux, Lefebvre was also a James Beard finalist for Rising Star Chef and was nominated for two James Beard Awards in 2017.