

Jugged Hare

(2 generous portions)

Ingredients

1 hare, skinned and gutted
1 bottle of red wine (750ml)
350ml beef stock
2 bay leaves
50g butter
1 onion, diced
2 sticks celery, sliced
1 carrot, roughly diced
4 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon salt
6 black peppercorns
6 dried juniper berries
generous sprig of thyme
2 tsp cornflour

Method

1. Joint the hare. I did this in a way that both diners would have one generous-sized thigh portion, and a smaller leg bone each. I then cut each side of the saddle into three large chunks, so they wouldn't shrink too small during cooking and get lost in the gravy.



2. Marinade the hare in the red wine, beef stock and bay leaves for anywhere between 5 - 36 hours. If the hare isn't fully-submerged, remember to turn it from time to time, so that it colours evenly.

3. Heat the butter in a thick-based casserole dish (choose one which has a tightly-fitting lid). Remove the hare from the marinade, and brown it in the butter - long enough to colour the outside of the hare, but not so long that the meat starts to cook through. Remove the hare from the pan, and set to one side.

4. If needed, add a little more butter to the casserole dish. Soften the onions and celery and carrots for 10 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook for a couple more minutes.

5. Add most of the wine-stock mixture to the pan, keeping back 5 tablespoons for later. Bring it to a quick boil for two minutes.



6. Turn down the temperature, and now return the hare to the pan. While the hare is on a slow-simmer on the hob, grind the black pepper and juniper berries in a pestle and mortar, or dry spice grinder. Add to the pan, along with a teaspoon of salt and the sprig(s) of thyme, and they bay leaves from the marinade.

7. Put the lid tightly on the casserole dish, and put it in the oven at 140C for three and a half hours.

8. Add the cornflour to the 5 tablespoons of cool wine-stock mixture kept back, and stir. Remove the hare from the oven, and stir in the cornflour mixture, to thicken the sauce a little, and introduce a nice sheen. Serve.

