

Boudin of rabbit with braised leg “bon-bons” and rabbit liver parfait

Serves 6

Ingredients

Allow ½ to 1 saddle per person
6 dried prunes (for boudin and parfait),
soaked overnight in 2 tbs of Madeira,
Sherry or white wine

Stock

Rabbit carcasses and bones
1 onion or leek, roughly chopped
1 sprig of thyme, 1 bay leaf, few peppercorns

Braise

2 rabbit legs (will yield about 300g of meat)
Olive oil to sauté the onion and rabbit
2 shallots, finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
Thyme, marjoram or tarragon
Splash of Madeira, sherry or white wine
50 g of bacon lardons (optional)
For the bon-bons: - 2 tbs plain flour, 1
beaten egg with a splash of milk, 1 pkt
Panko breadcrumbs and cooking oil

Parfait

1 rabbit liver (1 weighs c70g)
1 shallot, finely chopped
1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
Marjoram or tarragon
100 g of mushrooms (optional)
30 ml of single cream or 30 g melted butter
to emulsify the parfait
Sliver of marinated prune for decoration

Rabbit Loin Boudins

1-2 slices of fine dried ham per person
A few tarragon leaves
2 marinated prunes

Sauce Madère

40 ml white wine vinegar
80 ml Madeira wine
120 ml light stock (rabbit, chicken or veal)
25 g chilled butter per person



The French Lop was first bred as a rabbit for eating, beginning around 1850 in France. It is believed to have been produced by crossing two existing breeds, the English Lop and the Giant Papillon.

Rabbit is mostly sold whole in France, however you can get the saddles separately. The French like to use the entire animal and this recipe combines the liver and offal into a simple parfait, sweetened with prunes to be served with the meat.

The legs and flaps are slow braised for 2-3 hours and then taken off the bone and shredded, to be rolled in breadcrumbs to create a crisp bon-bon.

The saddle is stuffed with prunes and rolled in fine ham to keep it moist. We then steam them to help keep them moist before pan frying to crisp the ham or oven baking (optional).

The saddles may come with the kidneys attached and they can be pan fried in butter and confit garlic to add as a garnish.

Prepare the rabbit

If using a whole rabbit, separate the saddles, legs and offal from the body. The remainder of the body can now be used to make the stock. Remove any small amounts of blood or offal that remain as this will make the stock bitter.

The saddle is the section of back and ribs from the shoulders to the 'small of the back'. It will include the flap of skin that covers the stomach and often it will have the kidneys and liver included. The liver is about 70-90g and is used in our parfait. Remove the kidneys and the fatty tissue around them and the liver (if included) and set aside.

There may be some ribs in the loin flaps so remove them carefully by slicing along both sides and under them with your knife and then pull them out of the flap. Remove any fat from the saddle. Cut the excess saddle flap off (about 2cm from the saddle) and set aside for the braise and any small bones can be used in the stock.

The saddle loins are connected along the back with a thin membrane. The trick is to not cut through this membrane so the two loins come away as one piece of meat - if it is cut, it will not spoil the outcome! There are two fillets that run along the inside along the spine. Gently remove any sinew between the filets. The can be removed by hand or with a knife or kept attached to the loin (our method here).

Using a sharp knife, carefully cut along the inside of the fillet against the spine. Cut slowly and use the first few cm of the knife in short cuts, do not saw! Peel the filet back with your fingers and continue to cut the filet from the spine until you reach the end of the bones. You will see little white tendons appear. Get your knife behind these bones and continue to slice the loin from the bones. Hold back the flesh so you can see what you are doing. Keep peeling/slicing until you get to the back of the spine and you see the membrane along the back. Turn the saddle around and complete the same for the other loin. Gently hold the two loins together and cut as close as you can to the spine (between the bone and the membrane). Set the spine aside for the stock.

Prepare the stock

Place the olive oil and onion in a large saucepan and sweat gently. Turn up the heat and add the bones to brown them. Add enough water to cover and then bring to the boil for a couple of minutes. Skim off any fat and scum that rises to the top. Cover add the aromatics (peppercorns, bay leaves, parsley or other herbs, optional). Simmer gently for 1-2 hours.

Carefully remove all the bones with tongs and pass through a sieve. Allow the stock to continue to simmer until it has reduced by half and pass through a fine coffee filter and reserve for the sauce.

Prepare the braise

Soften shallot, garlic and herbs in olive oil. Add the legs and any odd bits of meat and brown on a high heat. Deglaze with the Madeira wine. Add rabbit stock and braise for 2 - 3 hours. After this time, the meat should fall off the bones. Remove and shred the meat with two forks and set aside. Reduce the liquid until thick and sticky and use to moisten the shredded meat. The meat should hold together when rolled in your hands. Set aside and chill.

Braised leg « bon-bons »

Using a table spoon measure, take a quantity of the braised leg mixture and roll into a ball.

Dust them with flour, dip in beaten egg and then drop into the breadcrumbs, shake off the excess and set aside for frying. In a small pan, heat enough oil to cover the bon-bons. When very hot, fry them quickly until golden brown and set aside on a baking sheet to drain. They can be finished by baking in a hot oven for 5 minutes.

Prepare the parfait

Soften shallot, garlic and herbs in olive oil. Add the finely chopped mushrooms (optional), cook through, then add the rabbit liver and other offal, cook until the juices run pink and the meat is cooked through, about 4 minutes. Deglaze with the wine and allow to cool and to rest for a few minutes. Blend in a food processor and emulsify with single cream or butter until you have a spreadable pate like consistency. Season well and chill until ready to use. Cut prune slivers for decoration.

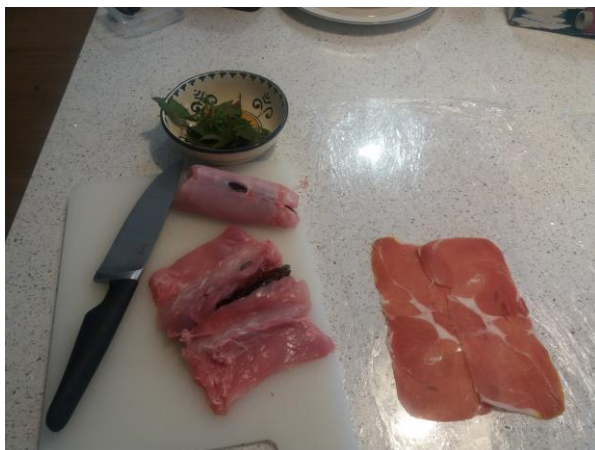
Sauce au Madère

Melt a knob of butter in a small pan, soften the shallot or white onion. Add a bay leaf and the peppercorns. Once the shallot is softened, add the vinegar and reduce by 2/3rds. Add the Madeira wine and reduce again by 2/3rds. Add the stock and reduce by 1/2 until you have a syrupy sauce.

Now you have a basic reduction, strain it through a sieve, pushing it through to extract all the flavour from the shallot. When you are ready to serve simply warm the sauce and whisk in small chunks (1cm) of frozen butter. The amount of butter depends on how much sauce you want - 100g is adequate for 6 people.

Prepare the Boudin with Jambon sec

Lay out two sheets of cling film three times the length of the saddle. Lay down the 2 pieces of ham - overlapped, flatten the saddle slightly, season well and lay prunes along the centre between the two loins. Roll up in the ham as tight as you can. Place the rolled saddle on the cling film and roll tightly and tie off the cling film at each of the ends. Roll in another piece of cling film and tie off in the same way. Set aside in the fridge.



To serve

Steam the rolled boudins for about 15 minutes per 200 g of meat until cooked through, to reach 65C, rest the meat. It can be finished in the oven for 5 minutes at 200C which will cook it further. Place the boudins and fried bon-bons on a baking tray and cook for about 5 minutes at 200C until warmed through.

Quenelle the pate and top with a small piece of prune.

Cut through the boudin to show the stuffing. Place 3 slices on each plate. Place the bon-bon on the plate and drizzle the sauce around.

Serve with a mix of summer vegetables tossed in confit garlic oil.