



Venison Broth

(makes 4 servings)

Venison is a very lean meat with a lot of muscle fibre and it's not hard to see why - they run around a lot! Consequently, it can be quite tough but marinating it overnight tenderises it beautifully and allows the gamey flavour to come through in a soup or a stew. We have worked on this soup for some months and now make and eat it a lot, simply because it is very gamey, very unctuous and very delicious.

Ingredients

500g diced venison
15 crushed juniper berries
5 bay leaves
10 black peppercorns
Large sprig rosemary
400mls dry sherry or fresh apple juice (or a mix)
2 tablespoons oil
2 large onions, peeled and finely chopped/sliced
10-15 large brown or white mushrooms, cleaned and chopped/sliced
2 large cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
2 tablespoons plain flour
3 heaped teaspoons English mustard powder
2 teaspoons sea salt
1.5 litres beef or game stock
1 tablespoon Mushroom Ketchup
Rice or barley (optional)

Method

Place the venison in a bowl with the juniper berries, bay leaves, peppercorns, rosemary and sherry, cover and leave in the fridge for several hours or overnight. If you are using apple juice, go for the clear variety not the thicker, pulpy style.

Warm 1 tablespoon of the oil in a soup pot and gently sauté the onions until soft, then add the mushrooms and continue to sauté until the mushrooms are beginning to release their juices.

Turn up the heat and stirring constantly, brown the edges of the onions and mushrooms. Reduce the heat, add the garlic, cook for another few minutes (don't let the garlic brown) then remove the pot from the heat and cover.

Remove the venison from the marinade, drying it briefly on kitchen paper, strain the liquid through a sieve and set aside then put the flour, mustard and salt in a large plastic bag, add the venison, close the bag and give it a good shake until all the chunks are well coated before removing with your hands to a plate (discard the remaining flour mix).

Warm the other tablespoon of oil in a shallow sauté pan and quickly brown the venison on all sides before adding to the soup pot. Stir well then add three quarters of the stock, the strained marinade liquid and the Mushroom Ketchup. Put the pot over a medium heat, bring to the boil then reduce the heat to very low, cover and simmer for at least an hour or until the venison is beginning to fall apart and is very succulent.

Add the remainder of the stock if the soup is becoming too thick and you can also add a couple of handfuls of rice or barley towards the end of cooking if you wish.

Check the seasoning, add more stock/water if you like a thinner soup and serve.