

Churston Traditional

FARM SHOP

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CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES APRIL 2018

We should really be talking about spring-like meals by now: looking forward to tender new vegetables, cutting and using all the fresh garden herbs and serving up lighter meals.

Which we could if winter wasn't refusing to go away. As it is, with log fires still glowing, central heating still working and the gloom refusing to lift for more than a day at a time perhaps we still need some cheering comfort food.

Time, then, to think about offal and other bits and pieces which don't tend to get used these days as much as they once were but which unfailingly offer outstanding eating quality. Ox cheek is a case in point. Restaurants are at last beginning to understand what a fabulous ingredient it is though few this side of the Channel will ever cook it as well as at the Boeuf Patates restaurant in Annecy, down near the Alps, where it's slow-cooked for 36 hours and comes to the table with a spoon – the only utensil required to eat it.

But this recipe will give you a memorable dish; the liver offers a twist on an old favourite and the kidneys will deliver a wake-up call on any breakfast table.

SLOW-BRAISED OX CHEEK WITH CARROTS AND WHITE WINE

Ingredients for six. Three ox cheeks, heaped tablespoon flour, one pig's trotter, split, 400g carrots, one bottle of dryish white wine, a large onion, three garlic cloves, a bouquet garni of parsley, rosemary and bay leaf, olive oil, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Chop the onion and peel and crush the garlic. Peel the carrots and cut into slices. Trim the ox cheeks, cut into two-inch chunks, season well and toss with the flour in a plastic bag. Heat a tablespoon of olive oil in a heavy pan and cook the onion and meat until the onion starts to soften and the meat has taken on a little colour. Transfer to a large casserole, add the wine – enough to cover – and the garlic, carrots, herbs and the trotter. Cover and cook gently at 170C gas mark 3 for five hours or until the meat has completely cooked and can be flaked. Allow to cool and refrigerate overnight. Remove any fat from the top, reheat and serve.

CALVES LIVER WITH ONIONS AND CRÈME FRAICHE

Ingredients for four. Four slices calves liver, 500g Spanish onions, very finely sliced, 50g butter, teaspoon salt, 15 grindings black pepper, tablespoon flour, four generous tablespoons crème fraiche, large sprig fresh thyme.

Method. Mix the flour, pepper and salt in a large freeze bag, add the liver slices and shake gently to coat evenly. Melt the butter in a frying pan and add the liver and the thyme. Cook the liver for 30 seconds on each side then remove to a warm serving dish. Add the onions and cook down over a medium to low heat, stirring to prevent them sticking. Continue to cook until a dark golden colour. Remove the thyme, stir in the crème fraiche, return the liver to the pan, heat through and serve.

DEVILLED KIDNEYS

Ingredients for four. Eight lamb kidneys, tablespoon English mustard powder, teaspoon each sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, 75g butter, two tablespoons port.

Method. Split the kidneys, using a sharp knife to cut in towards the core, but leave the two halves just attached. Use two cocktail sticks to keep each one perfectly flat. Make light cuts in them then toss them in the mixed mustard, salt and pepper. Heat the butter in a large frying pan until sizzling, add the kidneys, cook for a minute on each side then turn the heat down and cook gently for another four minutes, turning occasionally. Remove the kidneys, drain off any excess fat. Return the kidneys to the pan, add the port and bubble down for a minute or two. Serve on thick slices of toast or fried bread with a little of the cooking liquid drizzled over.

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