

POACHED LEG OF MUTTON WITH A CAPER CREAM SAUCE

This is one of the classic ways to cook mutton; the gentle poaching enables the meat to reach optimum tenderness. Wow your friends by serving it at a dinner party with some red cabbage and baby root veg.

SERVES: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2kg (4lb,6oz) 1/2 leg of mutton (bone-in)
- 4 large Spanish onions, peeled and sliced
- 2 generous tsp sea salt
- 4 bay leaves
- 5ml (1tsp) whole black peppercorns
- 1/4 stick cinnamon
- zest of 1 orange
- 2 litres (3 1/2 pints) light chicken stock
- 1 bottle (750ml) dry white wine
- 350g (12oz) unsalted butter
- 60 ml (4tbsp) finely chopped shallots
- 60 ml (4 tbsp) capers
- 600ml (1pt) double cream.

METHOD

1. Place the mutton into a large saucepan and bury it in the sliced onions. Add the salt. Tie the bay leaves, peppercorns, cinnamon and orange zest in a piece of muslin and add this to the pan with half of the wine.
2. Cover with the chicken stock and bring to a gentle simmer. Skim off the crust that forms on the surface with a spoon.
3. Simmer gently for approximately 2 hours or until tender.
4. After 1 hour, take a saucepan and melt 150g (6oz) of the butter, add the shallots and capers and cook gently until softened then turn up the heat to lightly colour the shallots.
5. Add the rest of the wine and cook briskly until the liquid reduces by half. Draw off approximately 1 litre (2 pints) of the poaching liquor from the mutton pan and add it to the capers and shallots. Bring this to the boil and reduce by half. Add the double cream and bring back to the boil. Reduce the mixture further until you achieve a glossy cream gravy. Adjust seasoning and keep warm.
6. When the mutton is ready, transfer to a serving dish, cover and keep warm. Strain the poaching liquid from the onions but retain.
7. Heat a large frying pan and melt the remaining butter until foaming. Add the drained onions and fry briskly until they turn golden and have begun to caramelize.
8. Place some of the golden onions onto a plate and slice the mutton finely on top of it. Garnish with a ladling of the caper cream sauce. **Note:** The retained poaching liquid can be used to make a delicious soup.