



Braised Beef Shanks with a Cabernet Espresso Reduction, Pearl Barley and Sautéed Winter Greens

Servings: 6

For the Pearl Barley

1 cup pearl barley
 2 teaspoons canola oil
 2 shallots, peeled and minced
 4 cups vegetable stock
 1 bay leaf
 3-4 sprigs lemon thyme
 ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
 Freshly grated black pepper, to taste

For the Herb Rub

1 mild green chili, seeded
 2 scallions, roughly chopped
 2 shallots, peeled
 2 garlic cloves, peeled
 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon thyme
 ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped
 ½ cup fresh flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
 1 stalk celery, roughly chopped
 ½ teaspoon allspice
 Olive oil as needed

For the Beef Shanks

3 ½ pounds beef shanks (or short ribs on the bone)
 2 Tablespoons canola oil
 1 large sweet onion, halved and sliced
 1 medium leek, halved, washed, sliced
 1 stalk celery, sliced
 3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

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FOR THE PEARL BARLEY

Soak pearl barley 2-4 hours. Drain and rinse. About an hour before you're ready to serve the braised shanks, heat a medium saucepan over low heat and add the canola oil. Sauté shallots briefly and add drained pearl barley stirring to incorporate. Add the vegetable stock, bay leaf and lemon thyme sprigs. Cover and simmer, stirring a few times during cooking, until softened but still some with firmness remaining, about 30-40 minutes. Stir in the parmesan and pepper. Set aside, covered, until ready to serve.

FOR THE HERB RUB

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor and process to form a paste. Set aside.

FOR THE BEEF SHANKS

Trim off any excess fat from the beef shanks and place in a large bowl. Massage the herb rub into the shanks, cover and chill for at least 1 hour or overnight.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Meanwhile, in a large heavy-bottomed Dutch oven, heat the canola oil. Add the shanks in batches, in a single un-crowded layer. Cook turning occasionally, until nicely browned on all sides, about 15 minutes; transfer to a plate. Repeat with the remaining meat until all has been browned.

In the same Dutch oven, and you may need a touch more oil at this point, add the onions and continue to sauté just until they have softened. Add leeks, celery, and garlic and continue to sauté a few minutes more. Add the tomatoes and stir in the red wine carefully scraping the browned bits from the bottom of the pan as you go. Add the herb sprigs and bay leaves. Reduce the mixture slightly and then return the shanks to the pan.

Add as much broth as needed for the braise, add salt and pepper to taste. Heat to a simmer, cover the pot and place it in the oven. Braise, stirring a few times, until the meat is fully cooked and falling off the bone, about 3 hours. The last half hour, add plums to the pot and more broth if needed and continue to cook until the shank meat is fully tender, another 45 minutes or so.

Remove the braise from the oven and reduce the liquid further if necessary. Discard the herb sprigs. Serve shanks over prepared pearl barley accompanied by the pan sauces and a generous drizzle of the Cabernet espresso reduction (see preparation below). Accompany with sautéed leafy greens. Garnish with chives.

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For the Beef Shanks (continued)

4 Roma tomatoes, peeled and seeded
 1 ½ cups red wine
 3 sprigs each: thyme, rosemary, and oregano
 2 bay leaves
 3+ cups vegetable stock, as needed to braise the shanks
 Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
 ½ cup pitted dried plums, quartered
 1 bunch chives, chopped for garnish

For the Cabernet Espresso Reduction

1 cup Cabernet Sauvignon or other hearty red wine
 ½ cup muscovado sugar
 ½ cup espresso coffee beans

For the Sautéed Leafy Greens

1 Tablespoon olive oil
 ¼ cup shallots, minced
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 2 heads of dark leafy greens such as Swiss chard, beet greens, collard greens or lacinato kale or a combination
 ¾ cup vegetable stock, more or less as needed
 Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

FOR THE CABERNET ESPRESSO REDUCTION

While the shanks are in the oven, prepare the Cabernet Espresso Reduction. Combine all the ingredients in a pan and bring to a simmer. Continue to simmer over medium heat until the liquid has reduced to half, about 10 minutes. Pour into a container to cool. This is easy to make ahead as well and keep in the refrigerator until needed. When ready to use, bring to room temperature and strain to remove the coffee beans.

FOR THE SAUTÉED LEAFY GREENS

At the last minute, just before plating, heat olive oil in a sauté pan and sauté shallots until they are translucent, about 2-3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté just until you begin to notice the aroma. Add the greens, tossing gently to incorporate the onions and garlic. Add enough broth to add a bit of moisture. Continue to cook just until the greens are wilted, another 3-5 minutes. Add more broth as needed ending the process with no liquid left in the pan. Set aside for plating.

IN YOUR GLASS

This recipe, with a hearty red wine both in the braising liquid and the reduction, which finishes the dish, begs for a fruit forward, rich, hearty wine companion in the glass. With the release of an exciting new entry in the Shafer line up this fall, TD-9™; it's an easy choice — it's a delicious blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Malbec. For those who enjoy a bigger, meatier choice, we know you will enjoy Eighty Four Wines Petite Sirah. This big, dark, energetic wine is one of our favorites when warmer days begin to make way for cooler nights.