

## Pot Roast of Beef Braised in Red Wine

Vegetable Oil	¼ cup chopped
4 pounds boneless beef roast, preferably chuck	canned tomatoes
2 tablespoon butter	
Vegetable oil	A pinch of dried thyme
½ onion, chopped	¼ teaspoon fresh marjoram or 1/8 teaspoon dried
1 carrot, peeled and chopped	Salt
1 stalk celery, chopped	Black pepper, ground fresh
1 ½ cups (or more) dry red wine (see note below)	
½ cup canned beef broth + ½ cup or more water	

Wine note: This pot roast is derived from Piedmont's *stracotto al Barolo*. Ideally you would have Barolo in the pot as well as Barolo in your glass. However, given the current price for Barolo, few of us are willing to put Barolo in the pot. Good substitutes are another Piedmontese red, such as Barbaresco or a Barbera, a hearty Rhone wine, California Zinfandel, Shiraz from Australia or a hearty Spanish wine from Jumilla, Ribera del Duoro, or the like.

Traditionally, after the roast is browned and the vegetables and liquid added, the roast is cooked covered in a moderate (350 degree) oven for approximately 3 hours. Ben likes to do this cooking over a low heat (a slow, steady simmer) on the top of the stove in a heavy cast-iron pot with a snug cover. Either method works well. It is harder to burn the roast in the oven if you forget it; it is easier to keep turn the roast if it is cooked stovetop.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. (Skip this step if you want to cook stovetop).
2. Put enough vegetable oil in a skillet to coat the bottom. Turn the heat on to high. When the oil is hot, but before it begins to smoke, slip in the meat. Brown it well all over, then transfer it to a platter and set aside. Set the skillet aside for later use, without cleaning it.
3. Choose a pot with a tight-fitting lid just large enough to accommodate the meat later. Put in 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, the butter, and the onion. Turn on the heat to medium, and cook the onion until it becomes colored a pale gold. Add the carrot and celery. Stir thoroughly to coat well, cook for 4 to 5 minutes, then put in the browned meat.
4. Pour the wine into the skillet in which the meat was browned. Turn on the heat to medium high, and allow the wine to bubble briskly for a minute or less, while scraping the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen cooking residues stuck to the bottom and sides. Add the contents of the skillet to the pot with the meat.
5. Add the diluted canned broth to the pot. It should come two-thirds of the way up the sides of the meat, but if it doesn't, add more wine, broth or water. Add the tomatoes, thyme, marjoram, salt, and several grindings of pepper. Turn the heat on to high, bring the contents of the pot to a boil, then cover the pot and put it on the middle rack of the preheated oven. (If you are cooking on the stovetop, reduce the heat until the liquid is at a slow, steady simmer). Cook for about 3 hours, turning the meat every 20 minutes or so, basting it with the liquid in the pot, which should be cooking at a slow, steady simmer. If it is not simmering, turn up the oven thermostat. On occasion it may happen that all the liquid in the pot has evaporated or

been absorbed before the meat is done. If this should occur, add 3 to 4 tablespoons of water. Cook until the meat feels very tender when prodded with a fork.

6. Remove the meat to a cutting board. If the liquid in the pot should be too thin and it has not been reduced to less than  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup, put the pot on a burner, turn the heat on to high, and boil down the juices, while scraping up any cooking residues stuck to the pot. Taste the juices and correct for salt and pepper. Slice the meat, put the slices on a warm platter, arranging them so they overlap slightly, pour the pot juices over them, and serve at once.

This recipe is adapted from Marcella Hazan's classic book, "Classic Italian Cooking", which Ben highly recommends. It has several other outstanding recipes for moist cooked beef, as well as simple but outstanding traditional Italian recipes. This cookbook is a standard, and so is available at any bookstore that carries a reasonable selection of cookbooks. Recipes you will find served frequently at Brookshire Farm include: