



BOTTEGA

N A P A V A L L E Y

Smoked and Braised Natural Short Ribs with Roasted Cipollini Onions and Smoky Jus

Recipe Courtesy: Michael Chiarello, *Bottega*

Serves 6

There are three steps: You'll brine the ribs for 3 hours, then cold-smoke them for 30 minutes so the smoke flavor gets pulled into the middle of the meat when you braise the ribs—it's not just a smoke jacket. Even in midwinter, it's worth breaking out the grill for a killer cold-smoked and braised short rib. Choose aromatic woods for the wood chips. I use the wood from wine barrels and fruit trees, as well as grapevines. The last step is braising the ribs in red wine for 6 hours, which makes them incredibly tender.

Succulent, bold, tender yet hearty, this beef dish demands a muscular, teeth-staining red wine.

Brine:

2 1/2 cups water
1/2 cup kosher salt
1/2 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons juniper berries
1 bay leaf

6 short ribs, about 1 1/4 pounds each

A few handfuls of oak, apple wood or other fruit wood chips

Roasted Cipollini Onions:

24 unpeeled cipollini onions (about 2 pounds)
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup balsamic vinegar
Sea salt, preferably gray salt
Freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup diced yellow onion
1/2 cup diced peeled carrot
1/2 cup diced celery
2 cups dry red wine
4 cups store-bought low-salt chicken broth
1 tablespoon juniper berries
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
3 bay leaves

Ancient-Grain Polenta (see recipe below) for serving

For the brine: In a large pot, combine the water, kosher salt, sugar, 1 1/2 teaspoon juniper berries, and bay leaf, and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and let the brine cool completely, then chill it in your refrigerator for at least 1 hour or up to 6 hours.

Arrange the ribs, bone-side up, in a single layer in a nonreactive 9-by-13-inch pan or other pan that fits all the ribs. Pour the brine over the ribs. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours. Remove the ribs from the brine and discard the liquid.

Soak the wood chips in cold water for at least 30 minutes. While the wood soaks, light an indirect fire in a charcoal grill. Cold-smoking means keeping the temperature at 78°F. Each time you add damp wood chips to the coal, it will bring down temperature, so the thermometer will show some movement. Use a charcoal chimney to start a fire in the center of the fuel bed. When the coals are ready, move them carefully to either side or place an aluminum pan in the center. Add at least 2 cups of water to the aluminum pan to keep the meat moist. Allow 30 minutes for the coals to heat up; they should have a light-gray coating of ash.

Drain the wood chips and shake off the excess water. Sprinkle a quarter of the chips over the coals. Put the ribs on the grill, cover the grill, and cook for about 30 minutes, quickly turning the ribs and adding another quarter more of the wood chips every 10 minutes before recovering.

For the onions: Preheat the oven to 375°F. With a paring knife, trim the top from each cippollini onion and a bare minimum from the root end. In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook the onions for 3 minutes. Drain and let cool to the touch, then peel off their skins. Heat a large, ovenproof sauté pan or skillet over medium-high heat, add the oil, and sauté the onions for 5 to 6 minutes, until medium-brown on both sides. Add the balsamic vinegar and simmer until slightly reduced, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook until the onions are tender, about 12 minutes. Remove from the oven. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

Reduce the oven temperature to 250°F. Heat a Dutch oven, a large ovenproof sauté pan, or a heavy roasting pan with a lid over medium-high heat and add the oil. Add the yellow onion, carrot, and celery. Reduce the heat to medium and sauté the vegetables until browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the wine and increase the heat to medium-high to burn off the alcohol. Add the short ribs and chicken stock. Bring to a hard boil and add the juniper berries, peppercorns, and

bay leaves. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer, then cover the pan and transfer it to the oven. Braise for 6 hours, or until the short ribs bend and almost break when lifted from the jus. Remove from the oven and let the ribs rest in the pan, covered, for 20 minutes. Turn off the oven.

Using tongs, transfer the ribs to a rimmed baking sheet and place in the oven to keep warm. Pass the broth through a fine-mesh sieve into a wide saucepan. Cook the broth over medium-high heat to reduce until thickened, about 15 minutes.

Spoon polenta onto the center of each of 6 warmed plates, top with 1 rib, and pour on a little of the jus reduction.

Ancient-Grain Polenta

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups heavy cream

3 cups cold water

Pinch of sea salt, preferably gray salt

1 cup fine-ground polenta

1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1/2 cup shredded fontina cheese

1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

In a large, heavy saucepan, combine the cream, water, and salt. Bring to a boil over high heat and then reduce the heat to medium. Gradually whisk in the polenta in a slow, steady stream. Whisk until the liquid boils again and the grains are suspended in the liquid. Keep whisking so the polenta doesn't scorch. Once it comes to a simmer, switch to a wooden spoon and stir every few minutes until the polenta is creamy without any hint of grittiness, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the nutmeg, fontina, and Parmesan.