

Venison in Red-Eye Gravy with Persimmons

By Chef Brad McDonald

Serves: Six

Ingredients

1kg boned venison haunch

1 litre 5% brine

50g lard or bacon fat

50g unsalted butter

A sprig of thyme

1 garlic clove, crushed

4 ripe persimmons, preferably

a kaki variety, peeled and

sliced into thin wafers

For the Red-Eye Gravy:

1.5 litres venison stock

20g ground coffee beans, as

for filter coffee

15g unsalted butter

100g Country Ham or serrano

ham, diced

Lemon juice

Freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Put the venison in a dish, pour over the brine, then cover and leave in the fridge for 12 hours or overnight. Remove and pat dry.
2. Melt the lard or bacon fat in a large cast-iron frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the venison and sear until well coloured on all sides. Transfer to an oven heated to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and roast for 8–10 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 52–53°C/125–127°F, turning the meat frequently. Remove from the oven and place on the hob. Add the butter, thyme and garlic to the pan and baste the haunch over a medium heat for a few minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to rest for about 10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, make the gravy. Boil the stock until reduced to 500ml (18fl oz). Remove from the heat, stir in the coffee and leave to infuse for 4 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve. Heat the butter in a frying pan, add the country ham and cook until lightly browned. Pour off the excess fat and add the reduced stock to the pan, stirring and scraping with a wooden spoon to deglaze. Season with lemon juice and black pepper.
4. To serve, carve the venison against the grain and place on plates. Arrange the persimmon slices and pour over a little gravy. Serve the rest at the table.

Brine

1. Brining has many different applications in the kitchen but it's certain that it can vastly improve your meat cookery. I generally use a standard ratio of 5 per cent salt to water. Meats can be brined for a short period of time to season them before cooking or for a longer period if you are curing them. The time will vary from 20 minutes to 24 hours, depending on the size and cut you are using.
2. Always rinse the meat thoroughly after removing it from the brine.
To prepare a 5 per cent brine, put 1 litre (1 ¾ pints) water in a pan with 50g (1 ¾oz) sea salt and heat gently, stirring until the salt has completely dissolved. Chill thoroughly before use. Adjust the proportion of salt if your recipe requires a different percentage.