

FALLOW DEER SADDLE, BEETROOT, GIROLLES, GAME CHIPS & PORT CACAO GLACE (Serves 4)

600g fresh Venison Loin/Saddle trimmed of all silver skin
200g Fresh Girolles, brushed and trimmed
1 Medium Sized Scrubbed or Peeled Potato
500g Fresh Peeled Beetroot (about 6 medium sized)
500ml Reduced Venison Preferably or Beef Stock
700ml Bottle of Regimental Port
500ml Balsamic Vinegar
2Tbsps of honey or 100g of Golden Castor Sugar
1 Bay Leaf
4 Sprigs of Thyme
2 Fresh Garlic Cloves
2 Shallots
40g Good Quality Dark Chocolate 55% - 70%

METHOD.

These first 3 steps can be completed well in advance and will keep well in the fridge for 3 days or even more.

Quick Pickled Beetroot. Take the golden castor sugar/honey and 300ml of the port and heat gently in a sauce pan until the sugar dissolves, place a couple of sprigs of thyme and 200ml of the balsamic in the saucepan and set to one side. Take 2 of the whole beets and slice thinly on a mandolin or very thinly with a sharp knife. Gently poach these in the pickling solution until al dente. Turn off the heat and set to one side.

Beetroot Puree. Chop the remaining beets into equally sized small pieces and put into a sauce pan. Put in 100ml of the balsamic vinegar and the remaining honey/sugar in the saucepan and top up with port to just cover the beets. Place a lid on the saucepan and gently cook until super soft. Now pour into a blender or take a stick blender to the beet and process until smooth. Pass through a sieve, pour into a piping bag or squeezey bottle and set to one side.

Port cacao Glace. Finely chop the shallots and garlic and sauté in a little oil with the bay and 2 thyme sprigs until soft. Put the remaining balsamic vinegar into the saucepan and reduce to a sticky syrup. Now add the last of the port and reduce until thick enough to coat the back of the spoon, add the reduced stock, and reduce again to the desired consistency. Sieve off the sauce and leave in a clean saucepan to gently reheat at the end. This is when we would add the chocolate to finish the sauce.

PUTTING THE DISH TOGETHER.

1. Cut the saddle into 4 equal pieces of 150g, season with salt and pepper and leave to one side for 10 minutes to get to room temperature.
2. Take the pickled beetroot discs out of their liquid and place 3 or 4 per person onto a clean cloth to dry off.
3. Make your game chips with the scrubbed potato on a mandolin, either waffle cut them or just thinly slice them. Preheat your fryer or a saucepan with vegetable oil to 180c. Fry until golden brown and crispy. Allow to drain either on kitchen towel or in their fryer basket until needed.
4. Gently reheat your piping bag with the puree in your microwave. It should be warm and not scalding hot, 2 minutes on full in a 900w microwave is plenty. Now keep it warm and set to one side.
5. Time to cook the venison. Heat a frying pan to medium hot, we want to caramelize the venison, not burn it. When just beginning to smoke add a splash of oil and place the venison in the pan. Leave to cook on one side for 4 minutes to then turn it over for a further 4 minutes. Now would be a nice time to add a knob of butter a smashed garlic clove of garlic and a sprig of thyme. Allow the butter to foam and turn down the heat. Now baste the meat with the butter for a further 2 minutes on both sides. Take the meat out of the pan and rest somewhere warm for at least 6-8 minutes. Give the frying pan a quick wipe and return to the stove for the mushrooms.
6. Chef's tip. The resting period is of paramount importance and allows the meat to relax, giving you a tender piece of meat which doesn't bleed out onto the plate when you cut it.
7. While the meat rests, gently reheat the sauce, once warm turn off the heat and stir through the chocolate until it totally disappears into your sauce.
8. Pop the cleaned girolles into the frying pan with some fresh oil and a pinch of salt and cook on a medium heat until slightly coloured and soft to the touch.
9. To plate up add big dots of the warmed puree to your plate or serving platter and place your pickled beetroot discs next to them. Now arrange the girolles in the gaps. Cut 3 generous slices out of each of the venison pieces and place on the pickled beetroot. Place the game chips onto the plate and now drizzle with the cacao glaze. Bon Appetit.

We serve this dish with seasonal vegetables and creamy dauphinoise potatoes. But the options are limitless, an especially popular side dish would be a spiced braised red cabbage or pancetta green beans for instance. Enjoy