

Toscana Chicken

serves 4-6

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 chicken parts, with bone and skin, thighs and breasts (wings removed) work best
- 12 whole garlic cloves, peeled
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 small dried red chilies (like chili de arbol) or ¼ teaspoon red chili flakes
- 2 large sprigs fresh rosemary
- ¼ cup packed fresh sage leaves, roughly torn
- 1 (750 ml) bottle dry white wine

Select a very large (14-inch) stainless steel or aluminum skillet. Do not use nonstick as the caramelization on the chicken won't develop as well on nonstick surfaces. If you only have smaller pans, use two as to not crowd the pan, but in each pan, use a full batch of the wine and other ingredients so that you have enough of the pan sauce.

Heat the olive oil in a very large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken, skin-side down. Be very careful of the popping, sizzling oil. Scatter with the garlic cloves, having most of them land on the chicken parts, and just a few touching the pan. Be patient and don't move the chicken pieces around too much. Shake the pan every few minutes to make sure the chicken is not sticking but don't pick up the chicken parts. Occasionally pick up the garlic cloves and place on the chicken to keep them from burning. Sear the chicken until the skin is very crisp and golden brown, about 10-12 minutes. Using tongs, turn each piece over. Season with a sprinkle of salt. Wearing gloves to protect from the chilies, break the chilies in half and add them to the pan along with the rosemary sprigs and sage. Cook for 5 minutes. Discard gloves, making sure not to touch your eyes or mouth, as the chilies will burn.

Add white wine around the perimeter of the skillet to come halfway up on the chicken parts. It will bubble and sizzle as it picks up the flavor from the pan. Simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes on medium so the wine is bubbling a bit but not cooking out. The pan juices should be thickened and caramel colored. Use a wooden spoon to help scrape up the flavor bits from the bottom of the pan.

When the chicken is no longer pink, remove it to a platter. Stir the pan juices and pour over the chicken. ■

Wine Pairing:

*Toscana chicken is complemented by a white wine of medium body but fuller flavor. The perfect match is **Baron Herzog Chardonnay**, a tangy, citrus-flavored wine which should also be used in the cooking. Serve chilled at 50°-55°F.*



* Image from actual recipe as prepared.

Fig And Port Braised Short Ribs

Serves 6

- 6 very large (2 x 4 inch) English cut beef short ribs, each tied
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon dried, ground thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 carrot, cut into ¼ inch dice
- 1 stalk celery, cut into ¼ inch dice
- 2 shallots, cut into ¼ inch dice
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 bay leaves
- 15 dried black mission figs, each cut in half lengthwise
- 4 cups (750 ml bottle) Port wine
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 4 cups beef or chicken stock

Fig Jam: _____

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small shallot, cut into ½ inch dice
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 10 dried black mission figs
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons red wine
- 1 tablespoon white wine

Pat the ribs dry with paper towels and place on a sheet of parchment paper. In a small bowl, combine the pepper, salt, thyme, and oregano. Season the short ribs with this spice rub, using your hands to pat it into the meat. Sprinkle the ribs with flour, patting into the meat and shaking off the excess.

Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven or a pot until very hot but not smoking. Place the short ribs in the pan, and sear until they are nicely browned on all three meaty sides, 5 full minutes per side, do not rush this step. Use tongs to rotate the ribs. Depending on the size of your pan, you might have to sear the meat in batches. Do not crowd the pan. As the ribs are nicely browned, transfer them to a cookie sheet to rest until all are done.

Turn the heat down to medium, and add carrot, celery, shallot, tomato paste, rosemary, and bay leaves to the pot. Using a wooden spoon, scrape up all the browned bits in the pot. Cook 6 to 8 minutes, until the vegetables just begin to caramelize. Add the figs. Add the Port wine and balsamic vinegar. Bring to a boil over high heat and boil for 3 minutes to reduce the liquid a bit.

Add the stock and bring to a boil. Return the ribs to the pot; the stock mixture should almost cover the ribs. Cover with a tight-fitting lid. Reduce heat and braise for 3 hours. This can be done up to 2 days in advance. If doing in advance, remove and discard any fat



* Image from actual recipe as prepared.

layer that may accumulate. Bring the meat back to a simmer and continue.

Prepare the fig jam: Heat the olive oil in a small pot over medium heat. Add the shallot and cook until shiny and translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the rosemary, figs, oregano, salt, and pepper. Cook for 3 minutes until the figs soften. Add the water, red wine, and white wine. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes. Allow to cool. Puree the mixture in a food processor until smooth and thick. This can also be made in advance.

When ready to serve, preheat oven to 400. After allowing the ribs to rest for 10 minutes, remove the ribs from the braising liquid. Place the ribs, meat-side-up on a parchment lined cookie sheet. Brush all sides with the fig jam. Bake for 10 minutes to brown the ribs. Transfer to a plate or platter. Drizzle with a bit of the braising liquid. You can drain and reserve the rest of the braising liquid and use as a wonderful beef stock base for a beef and barley or other soup. ■

Wine Pairing:

*The braised ribs require a rich, complex wine. **Bazelet haGolan Bronze Merlot** is rich and very flavorful. **Shiloh Legend** is perfect as a fruity, spicy alternative, though less complex than the Merlot.*



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