



Andalucian Rabo de Toro

Andalusia was occupied by invading Moors from North Africa for several hundred years, starting around the eighth century and until 1485 when Alhambra fell. The Catholic monarchs may have reconquered the Iberian Peninsula, but the Arab influence in Andalusia left a distinct mark on the culture and cuisine. The Moors brought exotic spices and new ingredients that are still prominent in Andalusian dishes. These ingredients include saffron, almonds, zucchini, dates, lemons, oranges, rice, cinnamon and sweet peppers. Moorish tradition also led to the institution of multi-course meals featuring several smaller dishes rather than one giant plate. This custom still prevails in Spanish homes, as most families tend to eat each course slowly, eating Tapas or sharing a dish, while focusing more on conversation than the actual act of eating.

Oxtail dishes have a long history all over Europe dating back to the Roman Empire and they go beyond this continent. As slow food is back on track, any oxtail stew is a perfect candidate for a long cooking dinner. The Andalucian Rabo de toro (literally “tail of the bull” in Spanish) is the name of an medieval dish born in XVI century in Cordoba where it was cooked with tails of corrida slaughtered bulls. They are variations in ingredients, some versions include Sherry, our recipe is more classical. It takes time to cook this rich stew, simmering at low heat with plenty of vegetables, wine and spices in order to get a soft meat and a rich sauce.

Serves 4, prep. time 4 hours

Ingredients:

- 1.5 kg oxtails
- 4 carrots, large dice
- half celery root, large dice
- 2 onions diced
- 5 garlic cloves, diced
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 3 bay leaves

- 4 tomatoes, peeled and diced (or canned tomatoes)
- 1 liter beef stock
- 500 ml dry red wine
- 6 tbsp balsamic vinegar (traditionally, Jerez wine vinegar)
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp dry thyme
- salt and pepper
- If you want to make an even more Andalusian style dish add some Chorizo and Cherry Tomatoes in the end.

Brown the oxtails on all sides in olive oil in a stewing pot.

Transfer the oxtails onto a plate.

Add the onion and sweat for 2-3 minutes, then add the garlic, carrots and celery.

Add tomatoes, wine and beef stock, sugar and vinegar. Bring to a boil, then add the browned oxtails, bay leaves, thyme. Lower the heat and simmer for 3 1/2 hours, stirring occasionally and adding water as required. This is the part where you might want to add more wine for a richer flavor; the important thing is to check the stew constantly and keep the liquid level slightly above the oxtails in order to allow them to cook thoroughly. Remember to add water from time to time as required; otherwise the stew will be too rich.