

Red Camargue rice with beef cheek gardiane

The red rice from the Camargue in southern France originates from wild rice that grew around the large soaked delta, where sea salt is also naturally formed.

The rice has a nutty taste and a slightly chewy texture, just like most types of brown rice. When you look at classic recipes from the Camargue, it's not that long ago that red rice was used. In cookbooks you can find recipes for rice salad, pilaf, and red rice served with meat braised in herbs and wine. I've made a variation with beef cheek to give a rich and quite thick stew which is very good to mix with the nutty rice.

Salt the meat and brown it all around in the butter in a pot.

Add the onion, garlic, a whole carrot, thyme, rosemary, wine, and 1 ½ cups (300 ml) water. Simmer uncovered for about 3 hours until the meat is completely tender.

Remove the meat and mash the vegetables slightly against the edge of the pan. Cook together into a smooth sauce. Strain and season with salt and pepper. Mix the sauce and meat in the pot and heat together.

Rinse the rice thoroughly. Bring to a boil with 3 cups (600 ml) of water and reduce the heat immediately. Simmer covered on a low heat for about 30 minutes, until all the water is absorbed. Check that the rice is cooked through. If it's too hard, add a few tablespoons of water and leave to steam, covered, on a low heat for another 5 to 10 minutes. Serve with the stew.

4 servings

20 oz. (600 g) beef cheek, trimmed and cut into large chunks
½ stick (50 g) butter
1 yellow onion, in wedges
3 garlic cloves, peeled
1 carrot, peeled
1 tsp. dried thyme
Pinch rosemary
2 ½ cups (500 ml) red wine
4 ½ cups (900 ml) water
1 ½ cups (260 g) red rice
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

