

Coq au Vin - Braised Chicken with Red Wine

You're doing it wrong: Chicken stewed in red wine is a classic. Traditionally, an old rooster was braised for as long as it took to get it tender. Unless you live on a farm and have a surplus, you probably won't use a rooster. U.S. birds aren't as gamey as those that this dish was built on, but we have some hacks to coax the most flavor out of what's available. First, we use organic chickens; they taste better and are better for you. We only use thighs in our stew, because they cook quickly and maximize flavor and richness to stand up to the red wine. Here's a tip: If you have any chicken necks stashed in your freezer from last month's whole roasted chicken like we do, throw one into the pot. It will add flavor and help thicken the sauce. This dish comes together with surprising speed once your ingredients are prepped. Serve it with simple boiled potatoes or over egg noodles.

See Cook's Note on thickening with a *beurre manie*.

Ingredients

4 ounces thick-cut pancetta roll, cut in matchsticks 1-inch long by 1/4-inch square
1 tablespoon olive oil (optional)
8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, trimmed of excess fat, patted dry
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 medium carrots, sliced crosswise into 1-inch pieces
1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced through the root end
1½ cups medium-bodied, young, fruity red wine, such as Burgundy, beaujolais, Côtes du Rhône or pinot noir
Bouquet garni, consisting of: 8 sprigs parsley, 5 sprigs fresh thyme and 2 bay leaves (sandwich the parsley and thyme between the bay leaves and tie together with twine)
1½ cups chicken stock
4 ounces frozen pearl onions, or chopped onions, about 1 cup
3 tablespoons butter
10 ounces cremini or button mushrooms, trimmed and halved, or quartered if large
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

special equipment

1 large Dutch oven or other wide heavy pot with lid, kitchen twine

Directions

for the stew

Place pancetta in a large Dutch oven and set over low heat. Cook, stirring until the fat renders out, then raise heat to medium-low and continue to cook and stir until the edges are crispy, 8

to 10 minutes total. If your pancetta doesn't render out enough fat, add a splash of oil while cooking to help it along. Transfer the pancetta with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel lined plate and set aside for garnish.

Raise the heat to medium-high. Season the chicken generously with salt and pepper. Working in batches so as to not crowd the pot, sear the chicken, skin-side down first, until nicely browned, about 7 to 8 minutes total. Remove the chicken to a large bowl, then repeat with the remaining chicken. Discard all but 2 tablespoons of the fat in the pot.

Add the carrots and onions to the pot, season lightly with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. If you find the pot is getting too hot and starting to scorch, reduce the heat to medium.

Pour the wine into the pot and scrape up any brown bits from the bottom. Simmer until the wine has reduced to 1 cup and bubbles become more rapid and smaller, about 4 to 5 minutes total. Add the bouquet garni. Nestle the chicken pieces, skin-side up, in the vegetables and wine. Pour in enough stock to come about three-quarters up the sides of the chicken, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, and cook, covered, for 15 minutes. Add the pearl onions, submerging them in the liquid, and continue cooking until the chicken is cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes longer. If it's still not cooked, cover, and cook an additional 5 minutes.

While chicken is cooking, heat 1 tablespoon butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté mushrooms for 4 to 5 minutes until tender. Add a second tablespoon of butter and cook until the mushrooms are golden brown and slightly crispy. Season lightly with salt and pepper and transfer to a plate for garnish.

Remove the chicken and vegetables from the Dutch oven. Boil the sauce over high heat until reduced to 2 cups, about 5 minutes. Remove and discard the bouquet garni. Meanwhile, make a *beurre manie* by mashing 1 tablespoon butter and flour to a paste. Whisk it into the liquid and simmer for 2 minutes, until the sauce thickens and turns velvety. Taste, and adjust seasoning if needed, remembering that the pancetta garnish will be salty. Return the chicken and vegetables to the pot, stir to coat, and arrange on a platter garnished with the pancetta and mushrooms.

Cook's Notes

Beurre manié means "kneaded butter." It's used as a thickener that is added at the end of making a sauce or a stew. It can be replaced by a slurry of arrowroot and wine whisked in at the end of braising. Watch the *coq au vin* video to see how to make and use it.

total time: 1 hour 25 minutes

active prep: 1 hour

serves: 4

difficulty: moderate