

Coq au Vin – a good winter warmer



Traditionally this recipe uses an old rooster which has more flavour than a young one but requires longer cooking. My experience of French chicken is that it is not as tender as the typical UK chicken and so requires more cooking. On the upside it usually has more flavour. If you have the skills you can joint a chicken yourself or ask your butcher to do it for you. Alternatively you can buy a suitable number of thighs and legs. In practice it is a matter of what you can get hold of.

The quantities are for 4 people.

- *poulet entier* (whole chicken) cut into joints or 8 drumsticks, thighs or legs
- 150 g *lardons* (lardons) or thick cut streaky bacon
- 8 *petits oignons ou échalotes* (small onions or shallots)
- 250g *petits champignons* (button mushrooms)
- 2 *gousses d'ail* (cloves of garlic) diced
- 300 ml chicken stock
- 600 ml red wine
- *thym* (thyme)
- *feuilles de laurier* (bay leaves)
- 2 *tiges de céleri* (stalks of celery)

In a large pan fry the lardons and transfer to a casserole dish. Fry the chicken joints in the lardon fat to brown them and transfer to the casserole dish. Fry the onions to soften them, adding the garlic for the last minute or two. Add the wine to *déglacer* (deglaze) the pan and boil for a couple of minutes and transfer to the casserole. Add the chicken stock to the casserole with the herbs and sticks of celery. Cook on the stove for an hour (or in an oven), adding the mushrooms half way through. Check to make sure the chicken is cooked and tender. If not cook for another 20 minutes and check again.

Serve in bowls with a baked potato or a baguette. Accompany with a glass of Malbec wine.
Scrumptious! It is lovely to snuggle down in front of our wood burner with a casserole dish on the top of the burner, ready to provide second helpings.

