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Braised Bison Short Ribs

SERVES 6

Braising is a simple and relatively hands-off way to make a delicious meal. Bison goes especially well with mashed or roasted potatoes and good fall vegetables like parsnips, turnips, Brussels sprouts, squash, and sweet potatoes. Start this dish about four hours before you want to serve it, so you have time to reduce the braising liquid.

—**Michael Haskett** M.B. HASKETT DELICATESSEN | SIOUX FALLS, SD

4 slices bacon, cut into short strips
3 pounds bison short ribs
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 bulb garlic (skin on)
1 large onion, roughly chopped
2 carrots, roughly chopped
3 ribs celery, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups red wine
6 cups beef or bison stock
3 sprigs fresh thyme
1 sprig fresh rosemary
2 fresh bay leaves
3 tablespoons butter, chilled

WHERE TO FIND...

Bison

Wild Idea Buffalo Co.
Rapid City, SD

Carrots, Onion, Herbs

Linda's Gardens
Chester, SD

Garlic

Prairie Coteau Farm
Astoria, SD

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

In a large sauté pan over medium heat, cook the bacon.

Meanwhile, pat the short ribs dry with a paper towel and season lightly with the salt and

pepper. Break the garlic bulb into cloves, leaving the skin on.

When the bacon is crisp, remove it from the pan with a slotted spoon and let drain on a paper towel. Leave the rendered fat in the pan and save the bacon for another day. (You need only the fat for this recipe.) Add the ribs to the pan and sear on all sides until nicely browned. (You may need to do this in batches.) Transfer the ribs to a Dutch oven or large, heavy braising dish that can go from the stovetop to the oven.

Drain off any excess fat from the pan, leaving just enough to cook the vegetables. Add the vegetables and garlic cloves to the hot pan, stirring occasionally to scrape up the good meat drippings from the bottom of the pan. When the vegetables are nicely browned, stir in the tomato paste and cook long enough to get rid of the raw tomato flavor, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir. Cook for about 1 more minute. Add the red wine and stir, scraping up any remaining flavor bits stuck to the bottom of the pan. When the wine has simmered for about 5 minutes, add the stock. Once the stock is warm, carefully pour the entire pan, vegetables and all, over the ribs in the Dutch oven. Add the thyme, rosemary, and bay leaves, and a small sprinkle of the salt and pepper. Cover with aluminum foil and a lid to keep the liquid from escaping. Place in the oven and cook for 3 hours.

Wash the sauté pan you browned the bison in and return it to the stove. You will use it to reduce the braising liquid later.

After 3 hours, check the meat. A fork should be able to slide into the meat, and the meat should shred when the fork is twisted. Have a little taste. If the meat is still chewy, give the ribs another 30 to 45 minutes. If the meat falls off the bone when you remove a rib from the pan, it is done.

Remove the ribs from the braising liquid and set aside. Pour the liquid through a strainer and into the washed sauté pan. Discard the solids. Bring the braising liquid to a simmer over medium heat. Use a ladle to remove any grease and impurities that rise to the top. This will take about 30 minutes.

Shred the meat. When the sauce is reduced to a gravy-like consistency, turn off the heat and whisk in the cold butter. Season to taste with the salt and pepper. Stir the shredded meat into the sauce. Serve.