

# DECEMBER RECIPE

RECOMMENDED PAIRING: 2015 LA MADONNINA 'OPERA OMNIA'

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 bulb fresh fennel
- ½ cup (125ml) olive oil, divided
- 6 ½ oz (185g) cubed pancetta (can substitute applewood smoked bacon)
- 3 ½ lbs (1.6kg) trimmed beef chuck or brisket, cut into 1.5-2 inch (3.8-5cm) cubes
- 1 tsp (5ml) pepper
- ½ tsp (2.5ml) salt
- ¼ cup (60ml) flour
- 1 yellow onion
- 1 carrot
- 6 cloves garlic, divided
- 2 T (30ml) fresh rosemary
- 1 T (15ml) fresh thyme
- 1 btl (750ml) red Tuscan wine (+ another bottle for drinking!)
- 3 cups (750ml) beef broth + extra as needed
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 2 ½ T (38ml) tomato paste
- pinch of sugar
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 T (45ml) fresh Italian parsley, finely minced, divided
- 2 T (30ml) butter
- 9 oz (258g) mushrooms, quartered



## BEEF TOSCANA

*This adaptation of Julia Child's Beef Bourguignon celebrates Tuscany while beckoning family and friends around the table. Since your cooking wine is the foundation of the sauce, don't skimp! Pick a very drinkable, full-bodied, Tuscan wine. This recipe is easy, though time consuming. The good news is it's meant to be made the day before. Serve the beef with polenta, a pasta that soaks up the juices, gnocchi, or mashed potatoes with parsley butter.*

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Trim the fennel bulb of tough outer leaves, cut in half and core, then medium dice. Add 1 teaspoon (5ml) salt to the water and then add the diced fennel. Boil for 4 minutes, drain, and rinse under cold water to stop cooking. Set aside.
2. Heat oven to 325° F (162° C). In a large skillet, preferably cast iron, heat 1 tablespoon (15ml) olive oil. Add pancetta and slowly brown until slightly crisp, about 8 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. Keep fat in the pan.
3. Place trimmed and cubed beef on a cutting board or butcher's paper. Sprinkle with the pepper and salt, then the flour. Toss. Heat the skillet with the fat, adding 3 tablespoons (45ml) of the olive oil. When it is shimmering hot, add half the beef to brown. Do not crowd. Regulate heat so it does not burn. Turn after 5 minutes. As beef browns, finely chop the onion and carrot together. On a separate board, mince 4 cloves of garlic, the rosemary, and the thyme. When beef is brown, use a slotted spoon to remove to a Dutch oven or deep casserole. Repeat with second batch of beef.
4. Put onions and carrots in the pan that was just used to brown the beef. Turn down the heat as needed to keep from burning. Use a spoon to scrape the bottom of the pan, turn heat to low, and sauté for 5 minutes. Add garlic, rosemary, and thyme and sauté for an additional 5 minutes. Add wine, increase heat to bring to a boil. Reduce wine over high heat for 8 minutes. Add broth, bouillon, tomato paste, pinch of sugar, and bay leaves. Return to a boil.

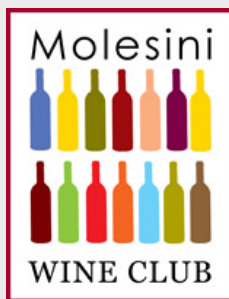
**TIME**

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- Prep/Cook Time: 1.5 hours
- Oven Time: 3.5 hours + 40 minutes to rewarm
- Prepare 1-2 days before service

**SERVING SIZE: 6**

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Remove from heat and add to the Dutch oven or deep casserole dish with the beef in it.

5. Add pancetta, fennel, and 1½ tablespoons (22ml) of the parsley to the beef mixture. Stir. Cover with heavy-duty foil, then the lid if the pot has one. Cook in the oven for 3 ½ hours, stirring once or twice. Add more beef broth if needed. Remove from the oven, cool, then cover and refrigerate for 24 to 48 hours.

6. Remove from refrigerator 1 hour before serving; skim off any accumulated surface fat. Heat butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, remaining 2 cloves minced garlic, 1.5 tablespoon (22ml) parsley, and salt and pepper to taste. Sauté until mushrooms are just tender and giving off their juices.

7. Add mushrooms to beef and reheat in a 350° F (176° C) oven for 40 minutes. Once the dish is hot, add additional broth as needed. You want a thick sauce; if it remains too thin, mix 2 tablespoons of flour with ¼ cup water and slowly pour into sauce to thicken. Heat completely. Serve over polenta, pasta, or potatoes. Garnish with additional minced parsley or sprigs of rosemary.