

RIGATONI WITH CHICKEN RAGU

WINE PAIRING: 2020 MAZZEI 'VICOREGIO 36' CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE DOCG

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bottle Tuscan red wine
- 14.5 oz can crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 peppercorns
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 4 oz finely diced bacon
- 1 small onion, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 8 chicken thighs, excess skin trimmed, rinsed in cold water, patted dry
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup cognac or brandy
- 1 pound rigatoni pasta (or pasta of your choice)

TO SERVE

- 3 tablespoons fresh Italian parsley, minced

FOR THE TABLE

- Grated parmesan cheese
- Crusty bread



This richly flavored ragu hits the spot and is destined to become a new favorite in your repertoire. Satisfying, comforting, and utterly delicious, it can be prepared well in advance. The recipe easily doubles, and it freezes well. Crusty bread, salad, and a hearty Tuscan red wine complete your meal.

1. Place wine, tomatoes, chicken stock, tomato paste, bay leaves, peppercorns, thyme, and rosemary in a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30-45 minutes to reduce by about half. Remove bay leaves, peppercorns, thyme, and rosemary. Set sauce aside until needed.

The sauce can be made up to 2 days in advance and refrigerated. When ready to use, bring it to room temp.

2. Preheat oven to 350°F. While stock reduces (or comes to room temperature if prepared previously), sauté bacon until lightly golden in a skillet large enough to hold the thighs. Use a slotted spoon to remove the bacon and transfer it to a Dutch oven or casserole dish large enough to hold the sauce.

3. Add the onions and garlic to the skillet and sauté in the bacon fat for 6 to 8 minutes until softened but not browned. Meanwhile, place flour, salt, and pepper in a plastic or paper bag. Add chicken thighs and shake to coat. Remove sautéed vegetables with a slotted spoon to the casserole dish with the bacon. Discard the remaining grease, wipe the pan, add vegetable oil, and heat until shimmering.

4. Remove thighs from the bag while shaking off excess flour, as you will want only a light coating of flour. Place in skillet and fry for 6 to 8 minutes on one side before turning and browning the other side. Transfer thighs to casserole dish. Pour excess oil out of skillet, return pan to heat, add

TIME

- Prep Time: 1 - 1.5 hours
- Cook Time: 1 hour + pasta cooking time
- Difficulty: Moderate

SERVING SIZE: 6 AS A MAIN COURSE

brandy or cognac, and light with a match if it doesn't burst into flames. When flames reside, pour in reserved sauce, stir, and pour over thighs. Cover baking dish with lid or foil. Bake for 1 hour.

5. Remove dish from oven. Carefully place thighs on a plate to cool slightly. Remove excess grease from the sauce (a medium size spoon is best for this). Skin and debone thighs, shredding meat into bitesize chunks. Add meat back to the sauce.

You can prepare to this point, up to 3 days in advance. Keep it refrigerated and well-covered. When ready to serve, reheat on stovetop, thinning with water if sauce is too thick.

6. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add pasta and cook according to package directions. Drain and plate, sprinkle with Italian parsley, spoon sauce on top, and sprinkle with Parmesan.