

BRAISED GOOSE

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- 1 10- to 12-pound goose, quartered, backbone and wings removed and reserved
- 2 onions, chopped coarsely
- 4 celery stalks, chopped coarsely
- 2 carrots, chopped coarsely
- 1 leek, quartered
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 8 sage leaves
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 4 cloves garlic
- ½ teaspoons cumin seed
- 3 cups dry red wine
- 4 cups veal stock
- 6 cups goose stock
- 1 ½ cups seeded chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup red-wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons cracked black pepper
- Salt to taste
- Fresh red currants and sprigs of rosemary for garnish, if desired

1. In a stock pot, set over moderately high heat, brown the goose bones, gizzards, and any meat scraps, turning frequently. Add ½ the onion, 2 celery stalks, 1 carrot, and ¼ the leek, all coarsely chopped, and cook, stirring, until vegetables are brown. Add 1 sprig of thyme, 1 sprig of rosemary, 3 sage leaves, 2 bay leaves, and the black peppercorns. Add enough water to cover by 2 inches. Bring the stock to a boil and simmer, skimming occasionally, for 6 hours. Strain the stock.

2. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

3. Heat a high-sided roasting pan or large casserole over moderate heat to hot. Add the goose breasts and legs, skin side down, and brown. Turn over and brown other side. Drain off all but ¼ cup of the fat from the pan. Add the remaining vegetables and garlic, then cook, stirring frequently, until browned. Add the cumin seed, red wine, veal stock, goose stock, and tomatoes, bring liquid to a boil, and cover.

4. Transfer pan to the oven and braise goose for 1 ½ hours or until meat is very tender and pulling away from the bones. Transfer meat to a platter and strain cooking liquid into another pan. Degrease surface of fat and keep warm.

5. Meanwhile, in a skillet set over moderately high heat, cook the sugar until melted, stirring and washing any sugar crystals clinging to the sides of the pan with a brush dipped in cold water.

Continue to boil the sugar, shaking the pan over heat, until deep golden. Carefully add the vinegar and simmer, stirring, until mixture is combined well. Add caramel mixture to braising liquid.

6. Season sauce with salt and cracked pepper to taste. (Sauce should be sweet, sour, and peppery.)

7. Remove the leg bones and breast bones from the goose. Cut the leg in half and the breast into 4 slices.

8. Serve the goose with the sauce. Garnish with the red currants and sprigs of fresh rosemary.

Yield: 6 servings