

Guineafowl Braised with Spring Onion, Cider & Apple



Serves 2 - 4

Prep 10 mins

Cooking 50 mins

Challenge

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil
2 large pheasants, jointed
4 spring onions, trimmed and sliced
2 rashers of smoked, streaky bacon
3 sprigs of thyme, leaves picked
2 Bramley apples thickly sliced
2 tbsp brandy or Calvados
800 ml dry cider
300 ml chicken or game stock
70 ml double cream

For the pickled apples

1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp caster sugar
2 tbsp cider vinegar
2 juniper berries, crushed
1/2 Bramley apple, peeled & cubed

To serve

1/2 tsp mace or ground nutmeg
50g skinless roasted hazelnuts, chopped

1. For the pickled apples, put the salt, vinegar and berries in a small pan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, add the apple cubes and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed, high-sided casserole and season the pheasant joints with salt. Brown them all over, rendering out some of the yellow fat into the pan. Remove to a plate and season with pepper. Add the spring onions, bacon and thyme to the pan along with a pinch of salt and a good grind of black pepper, and fry until the spring onions have softened - about 8 mins. Add the apple slices and cook until starting to colour on both sides.
3. Spoon in the brandy and cook until evaporated, add the cider and simmer for a few more minutes to cook off the alcohol. Pour in the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce to a gentle simmer and add the pheasant joints back to the pan, covering with a circle of baking parchment.
4. After 15 mins, remove the breasts from the pan to a plate & return the circle of baking parchment to the pan. Cook gently for 20 mins more, then remove all the pheasant pieces to a plate & turn the heat up to reduce the sauce. Boil hard for a few mins until reduced, then stir in the cream & mace & turn off the heat. Return the pheasant pieces to the sauce - the residual heat will warm it perfectly.
5. Divide the pheasant pieces between the plates and spoon over the sauce. Garnish with the pickled apples and hazelnuts.