

Oeufs en Meurette



Serves 4 Prep 20 mins Cooking 40 mins Challenge

Ingredients

2 tbsp white wine vinegar
4 large, very fresh eggs
small handful of parsley, finely chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the croûtes

4 slices white bread
2 tbsp sunflower oil

For the sauce

15g butter
1 small onion, sliced
1 small carrot, sliced
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
250ml chicken stock
600ml red wine
2-3 sprigs of thyme
2 bay leaves
2tp light muscovado sugar
1 tbsp beurre manié

For the garnish

15g butter
12 shallots, peeled
generous pinch sugar
85ml chicken stock
2 rashers of rindless dry-cured smoked streaky bacon
75g button mushrooms, quartered

1. For the sauce, melt the butter in a large, deep frying pan. Add the onion, carrot, celery and fry briskly for 6 minutes, until the vegetables start to colour. Add the stock, wine, thyme, bay leaves and sugar, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 40 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve into a clean pan, pressing the vegetables well to extract all the flavour - you should be left with about 150ml.
2. For the garnish, melt half the butter in a small, shallow pan. Add the shallots and the sugar and cook over a medium-high heat until nicely browned all over. Add the stock, then cover and simmer gently until the onions are tender. Remove the lid, turn up the heat and cook vigorously until the liquid has reduced and the onions are covered in a shiny brown glaze. Set aside and keep warm.
3. Cut the bacon across into short fat strips (lardons) and fry gently until lightly golden. Add the mushrooms and fry until tender. Season with salt and pepper, set aside and keep warm.
4. For the croustons, cut a 7.5cm round or oval from each slice of bread and fry them in oil for 1-2 minutes on each side, until golden. Drain briefly on kitchen paper and keep warm.
5. Bring the sauce back to a simmer and whisk in the beurre manié. Simmer for 2-3 mins to cook out the flour.
6. Meanwhile, to poach the eggs, bring 5cm of water to the boil in a wide, shallow pan. Add the vinegar and 1/2 tsp of salt and reduce to a very gentle simmer. Break in the eggs and leave to poach gently for 3 minutes. Lift out with a slotted spoon and leave to drain on kitchen paper. Repeat with the rest of the eggs.
7. To serve, put the croûtes on to 4 warmed plates and put the poached eggs on top. Scatter over the button onions, mushrooms and bacon and then spoon a little of the sauce over everything. Scatter with the chopped parsley and serve.