

Mamma Licia's:

Coniglio con Gremolata e Polenta rabbit with gremolata and polenta

Ingredients for 4 servings

Gremolata

- 1 tbs fresh Italian flat leaf parsley, chopped finely
- 3 sprigs of fresh rosemary, chopped finely (+ a couple whole for garnish)
- zest of 1 organic lemon

Rabbit

- 3-4 tbs good extra-virgin olive oil, preferably Italian
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper
- 2 cloves of fresh garlic, cut in half
- 1 fresh rabbit cut into: back legs, front legs and the saddle cut into two pieces (remove organs and reserve for stock). Pat dry all the pieces.
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- 1 medium yellow onion, very finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, very finely chopped
- 1 small celery stalk, very finely chopped
- ¼ cup dry white wine (Pinot Grigio)
- 2-3 cups of homemade rabbit broth (or other low-sodium light broth)
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- ⅓ cup of peeled whole plum tomatoes, hand crushed & their juice reserved
- 2 tsp potato or corn starch
- 3 tbs milk (or broth)

Polenta

- low sodium chicken stock (½ the liquid required by the package)
- water (½ the liquid required by the package)
- coarse sea salt, at least 1 tbs
- 8 oz. instant Italian cornmeal *polenta* (approx. 7 min cooking time)
- 2 tbs butter
- ⅓ cup of freshly grated aged Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
- fine sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

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Homemade Rabbit broth

Heat a medium stock pot over a medium flame. Add 1 tbs of good extra-virgin olive oil and a clove of fresh garlic. Cook for 1 min then add the rabbit organs (heart, lungs, liver and kidneys) and saute until browned. Add 4 cups of water, 1 bay leaf, 1 medium carrot and 1 celery stalk (both coarsely chopped), 1 medium yellow onion quartered and 1 tsp. of whole black peppercorns. Cover and cook over a medium low flame for an hour. Strain and your clear rabbit broth is ready.

*The remaining cooked vegetables and organs can be pureed and added to ground meat for a delicious moist meatloaf.

Gremolata

Mix the parsley, rosemary and lemon zest together. Set aside for at least 30 min.

Rabbit

Heat a medium heavy bottomed pot (or a large saute pan) over a medium flame. When warm, add the oil but do NOT let it smoke. If the pan is too hot lower the flame or move to a smaller burner. Immediately add the crushed red pepper, fennel seeds and garlic halves and cook until the oil is fragrant with these flavors, 1-2 min. Meanwhile pat dry all the rabbit pieces and season each side with sea salt and freshly ground pepper.

When the oil is ready add the rabbit pieces and sear one side until browned. Turn pieces over and add the onions, carrots and celery. Let everything cook - stirring only the vegetables every now and then - until the vegetables have softened, 2-3 min. and the other side of the rabbit pieces has browned.

Raise the flame a touch and deglaze the pan with the white wine. Then lower to medium-low and add the crushed tomatoes, the bay leaf and enough rabbit broth to cover everything. Season with some sea salt and fresh pepper and stir. Cover and braise (cooking at a gentle boil) checking and stirring occasionally, for 45-60 min. until the liquid has reduced and the rabbit is cooked through and tender, almost falling off the bone.

Discard garlic halves and bay leaf. Whisk the starch in the milk and add to the pan. Adjust seasonings to taste and cook 1-2 min uncovered. Cover and keep warm. When ready to plate, add the *gremolata* and serve immediately over the polenta.

Polenta

In a heavy bottomed pot heat the water and stock until it starts simmering, add salt and let it dissolve. Whisk in the polenta and keep whisking for a minute or so. Hot *polenta* splatters can cause burns, be careful and do not let it boil! Keep the flame on medium low and stir often until done (as per directions on package). Remove

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from heat, stir in the butter and cheese and adjust seasonings to taste. Cover and let it rest for 1 min., then serve immediately. If not ready to plate, pour the *polenta* over a flat serving vessel (cutting board, plate) and cover with a kitchen towel previously soaked in hot water and wrung dry. When ready, cut using a strong cotton string.



Plate the polenta then add the rabbit pieces. Spoon some of the sauce over the rabbit and add a rosemary sprig as garnish. Serve immediately. Buon Appetito!

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