

GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

Braised Chicken Legs

Serves 6

Ingredients

6 chicken legs, thigh and drumstick together
Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
All-purpose flour, for dredging
4 to 5 tablespoons neutral oil, or unsalted butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white or red wine, beer, chicken stock or water
1 large yellow onion, peeled and diced
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
2 celery stalks, diced
2 cloves garlic, peeled and diced
3 sprigs of thyme, rosemary or sage, leaves removed and roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
3 cups chicken stock, or water
2 tablespoons roughly chopped parsley leaves

Season chicken legs with salt and pepper and let them sit for a while, 15 minutes to an hour, or overnight in the refrigerator.

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Put a cup or two of flour in a large bowl, add half the chicken and tumble the legs around to coat.

Set a large oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Swirl in 2 tablespoons oil or butter and allow to melt and foam. Shake excess flour off the chicken legs and slide them into the hot pan in one layer; adjust the heat so the legs are sizzling nicely. When the legs begin to brown, after about 5 minutes, turn them over to brown the other side, an additional 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the chicken to a platter and repeat with remaining legs, adding more oil or butter if the pan seems dry.

Pour off the grease in the pan and add the wine or other liquid to the skillet, scraping at the sticky bits. Let simmer over medium heat until pan is completely deglazed. Pour that liquid into a small bowl and set aside.

Add remaining oil or butter to the pan and allow it to heat. Add onion, carrot, celery and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened nicely, approximately 10 minutes. Add garlic, thyme and bay leaf and cook for a minute or so, then return all the chicken to the pan, skin side up, along with the reserved glazing liquid and between 1 and 3 cups stock or water, enough to come up the sides of the chicken but not to get them swimming. Bring to a simmer and then put the skillet in the oven.

After 5 minutes or so, reduce the oven heat to 325 degrees and cook until chicken is very tender, 30 to 40 minutes. (Test for doneness by inserting a slender-bladed knife into the meat. It should pull out

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easily.) Remove the skillet from the oven, lift the legs from the skillet and put them aside again. Pour the liquid contents of the skillet into a small bowl and allow it to sit for 5 minutes or so, letting the fat rise to the surface. Use a small ladle to skim off and discard the fat, then return liquid to the pan, along with the chicken. Bring back to a simmer on the stovetop, then return to the oven for 5 minutes or so before serving, sprinkled with the chopped parsley, or save to reheat later.

Credit: Cal Peternell