



Braised Pork with Prunes and a Potato Top



Choose good quality British pork for this dish and with several great producers on The Artisan Food Trail to choose from, you can't go wrong.

Inspired by all things English, this recipe uses old traditional flavours that complement each other so well. Cider and apples for sharpness, prunes for sweetness and a dash of mace, thyme and juniper for warmth and fragrance.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 700g pork shoulder, cut into large cubes
- 1 tbsp oil
- 6 juniper berries, well crushed
- 1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
- half tsp ground mace
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 225g onions, peeled and sliced
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 4 tsp Alan Coxon's Ale-Gar (optional)
- 100g pitted prunes, halved
- 1 large cooking apple, peeled, cored and sliced
- a little caster sugar
- a little butter
- 150ml dry cider

Method

Preheat the oven to 160C / Gas 3.

Place a frying pan on the hob and add the oil.

Turn the heat to medium-high until the oil is hot, then add the pork. Fry the meat, turning occasionally, until it is nicely browned all over. Remove from the frying pan and transfer to a shallow, fairly wide flame-proof casserole dish.

Season the meat with salt and pepper and sprinkle over the crushed juniper berries, thyme and ground mace.

Add the onions and garlic to the pan, that the pork was in. Gently fry the onions until they become softened.

Tip the onions into the casserole dish with the pork and add the Ale-Gar (optional) and mix gently, so everything is well combined.

Tuck the pieces of prune in here and there and then arrange the apple slices over, giving them a very light sprinkling of caster sugar.

Arrange the potato slices on top so that they overlap each other.

Season again, then dot with a few small pieces of butter and pour over the cider.

Cover the dish, place in the oven and cook for an hour and half. When this time is up, increase the oven temperature to 230C / Gas 8. Remove the lid from the casserole and cook for a further 20 minutes or so until the potatoes take on a nice golden brown colour. This can also be done under a hot grill.

NOTE: *Although optional, we can highly recommend adding Alan Coxon's Ale-Gar to give a nice depth to the finished flavour. To us, it just seemed very appropriate to add it as the rest of the ingredients echo the time which inspired the Ale-Gar's recipe.*