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A modern classic Italian dinner

Bring back memories of Nonna's kitchen with our delicious recipe for Slow Cooker Osso Bucco. A classic Italian dish where veal shank is slowly braised with vegetables, wine and broth until this lean cut is fall-off-the-bone tender, we've modernized it a little bit with the use of a slow cooker (if you don't have one, put everything into a heavy Dutch oven and braise at 300°F for about 2½ hours). We've also amped up the flavour by replacing the traditional white wine with Valpolicella, a light but fragrant Italian red. If you don't have it on hand, feel free to replace with one of your own favourites.

While the meat is cooking and filling your kitchen with delicious aromas, you will have plenty of time to prepare our Herb Gremolata, a light condiment that will contrast well with the tender, flavourful meat. Our Mediterranean-inspired Romaine and Artichoke Salad makes the perfect appetizer for the rich meal ahead, with fresh romaine lettuce and tomatoes for lightness and crunch, and savoury notes from the marinated artichoke hearts, capers, olives and Parmesan cheese. Buon appetito!

SLOW COOKER OSSO BUCO

2 cups dry white wine*
3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil*
1 tsp freshly ground pepper*
1/2 tsp salt*
4 meaty veal shanks, 2 inch thick (about 5 lb/2.5 kg)
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups chopped onions
1 1/2 cups chopped cored fennel bulb
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3/4 cup chopped Roma tomatoes
1 tbsp marjoram, crumbled
2 strips orange peel (3x¾ inch each)
2 bay leaves
2 cups Valpolicella or other dry red wine
2 cups no-salt-added beef broth
Herb Gremolata (recipe follows)*

1. To prepare marinade, combine white wine, 3 tbsp oil, 1 tsp pepper and 1/2 tsp salt.

2. Pour marinade into an extra-large heavy zip-lock plastic bag. Add shanks and squeeze bag to coat shanks with marinade. Seal bag and place on a tray. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to 18 hours.
 3. Remove shanks from marinade; discard marinade. Pat shanks dry and sprinkle with 1/2 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp pepper.
 4. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large non-stick frypan over medium-high heat. Add shanks in batches and brown on all sides.
 5. Transfer shanks to a greased 6 quart slow cooker; set aside.
 6. Add onions, fennel and garlic to same frypan; sauté over medium heat for 2 minutes.
 7. Add tomatoes, marjoram, orange peel and bay leaves; sauté for 1 minute.
 8. Add Valpolicella and cook, stirring, until liquid is reduced by half, about 5 - 6 minutes; pour mixture over shanks in slow cooker. Pour broth over top; stir to combine.
 9. Cover and cook on high heat setting for 4 - 4 1/2 hours or until meat is very tender and beginning to fall off the bone.
 10. Using a large slotted spoon, carefully transfer shanks to a platter; reserve broth mixture. Cover shanks with foil; keep warm.
 11. To prepare sauce, pour broth mixture into a large non-reactive saucepan. Bring to a boil and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until broth mixture is reduced by about half, about 30 - 40 minutes.
 12. Strain sauce through a large strainer into a serving dish; discard solids.
 13. Serve shanks topped with sauce and Herb Gremolata. Serves 4.
- Cook's Note: Veal shanks may not be readily available in regular grocery stores. Ask for them at specialty butcher shops.

Nutritional analysis per serving:

844 calories, 28.1 g fat, 119.1 g protein, 2.5 g carbohydrate, 0.2 g fibre, 872 mg sodium

*Ingredient not included in nutritional analysis.

HERB GREMOLATA

2 cups fresh parsley, chopped
1/4 cup fresh oregano, chopped
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp grated lemon peel
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp caraway seed, toasted

1. Combine all ingredients. Refrigerate until serving. Makes about 3/4 cup.

Nutritional analysis per 1 tbsp serving:

8 calories, 0.1 g fat, 0.4 g protein, 1.6 g carbohydrate, 0.6 g fibre, 7 mg sodium



ROMAINE AND ARTICHOKE SALAD

- 2 tbsp (25 mL) fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) water
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped drained capers
- 1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) freshly ground pepper
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) olive oil
- 8 cups (2 L) torn romaine lettuce
- 1 can (14 oz/398 mL) artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) sliced ripe olives
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) diced tomato

To prepare dressing, whisk together first 7 ingredients (lemon juice through garlic) until combined. Gradually whisk in oil until blended. Combine lettuce, artichokes, olives, Parmesan cheese and tomato in a bowl. Add dressing and toss to coat. Serve immediately. Serves 8.