

Slow Cooked Afelia

Serves 2

360g pig cheek
120ml red wine
1tbsp cooking oil
1tbsp chopped onion
½ tsp coriander seed, lightly crushed
1 bay leaf
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
120ml cold water
salt/seasoning

Cube the meat, about ¾" seems to do well, but cut smaller if preferred. Heat the oil in a heavy based lidded saucepan (large enough to hold the meat in a single layer, if possible) over a medium heat and sauté the onion for a few minutes until translucent but not browning. Remove the onion with a slotted spoon and set aside. Brown the meat in the oil over a medium-high heat, add the coriander seed when the meat is nearly brown on all sides and finish the browning. Tip in the red wine, turn the heat down as low as it will go (it is important to lower the heat at this point) and stir the pan well to deglaze. Return the onion to the pan, add the pepper and bay leaf. Add enough water to just cover the meat, if this uses more than the 120ml, add some more wine, it should be a roughly 50:50 mix. Do NOT add salt until the meat is cooked. Cover the pan tightly and if you have a heat resistant mat, set the pan on the mat over the lowest heat. Check after about an hour and a half that the stew is not becoming too dry (I use a pan with a glass lid so I don't have to lift the lid which allows steam to escape), add a little water if necessary. Continue cooking for a total of at least 3 hours, until the meat is very tender – I usually leave it for nearer 4 hours.

Without a mat, simmer on the lowest light for 1hr30mins (checking half way through) then turn off the heat and allow the stew to rest for an hour (or up to overnight) before bringing it back to a gentle simmer for 10-15 mins.

Taste and adjust the seasoning before serving. I sometimes add ½ tsp low salt gravy granules if the gravy is a bit thin, but it usually thickens nicely during the cooking.

You can use a slow cooker, it's best to sauté the onion and seal the meat as above before putting everything into the cooker. Use a little less liquid, only nearly covering the meat. Do not lift the lid during the cooking time. Slow cook for 4-6 hours.

Serve with rice or cous cous.

You can cook mushrooms in this way, the flat field mushrooms chopped into biggish chunks work best. Of course they don't need such a long time (or quite as much liquid), half an hour will do.