INDIRECT · MEDIUM

Cordoba-Style Oxtail Braised in Red Wine in a Dutch Oven on the Kamado

Cordoba-style rabo de toro is the great winter stew of Andalusia. An oval Dutch oven inside the kamado cooks it slowly, at about 150 °C, until the meat slips off the bone by itself.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
40 min	270 min	4	150 °C

Ingredients

- **1.6 kg** oxtail (rabo de toro or rabo de vaca), in 4-5 cm rounds
- **80 ml** extra virgin olive oil
- **2 ud** carrots, in thick rounds
- **6 diente** garlic cloves, skin on and crushed
- **50 ml** brandy, optional
- **3 hoja** bay leaves
- **12 g** salt
- **40 g** plain flour, for dredging
- **2 ud** large onions, sliced
- **1 ud** leek, sliced
- **500 ml** full-bodied red wine (tempranillo or monastrell)
- **500 ml** beef stock, approximately
- **4 rama** sprigs of thyme
- **al gusto** freshly ground black pepper

Method

1 SEASON AND FLOUR THE OXTAIL

Take the oxtail out of the fridge an hour ahead. Pat it very dry, season with salt and pepper and dredge it in the flour, shaking off the excess: a thin coat, only to help browning and to thicken the sauce. Cut the vegetables meanwhile: onion in thin slices, carrot in thick rounds, leek in rounds.

2 LIGHT WITH THE DEFLECTOR

Fill the firebox with lump charcoal, light it and set the deflector under the grate. Bring the chamber to 150 °C with the bottom vent slightly open and the top vent half open, and let it settle for 20-30 minutes. It is easier to creep up than to bring down a ceramic that has overshot, so do not correct in a hurry.

3 SEAR THE OXTAIL IN THE POT

On the hob, heat the oil in the Dutch oven over medium-high heat and sear the oxtail in batches, without crowding, 3-4 minutes per side, to a deep brown. Set the meat aside on a plate. Do this on the hob, not on the kamado: with the deflector in and the chamber at 150 °C there is not enough heat to brown, and pulling a ceramic down from 230 °C takes a long time.

4 SOFTEN THE VEGETABLES

In the same pot, with the fat that remains, soften the onion, carrot, leek and garlic for 10-12 minutes, scraping the base, until the onion is soft and colouring. Raise the heat, add the brandy if using and let it evaporate. Pour in the wine and boil for 5 minutes to take off its sharpest alcohol.

5 LOAD THE POT

Return the oxtail to the pot in a single layer, add the bay and thyme and pour in hot stock to come three-quarters up the meat, without submerging it. Bring to a gentle simmer on the hob and cover. Wearing gloves, carry the pot to the kamado and set it centred on the deflector.

6 BRAISE FOR THREE TO FOUR HOURS

Close the kamado and hold the chamber at 150 °C. When opening, always burp the lid: lift it about 5 cm, wait about 5 seconds, then open fully with your face turned away, because of flare-up risk. At the hour and a half, burp the lid, lift the pot lid with gloves and turn the pieces with tongs; check the liquid is still three-quarters up and, if it has dropped, add a little hot stock. Nothing more is needed. Allow 3-4 hours in total.

7 CHECK FOR DONENESS

At 3 hours open with a burp and prick a piece with a fork: it should go in without resistance and the meat part from the bone at a touch. If not, cover and give it 30 more minutes. Once it is, take the pot out of the kamado with gloves, carry it to the hob and lift the oxtail with tongs onto a platter and keep it covered with foil.

8 REDUCE THE SAUCE AND REST

Remove the bay and thyme. Blend the vegetables with their liquid or push it through a sieve, and reduce the sauce on the hob over high heat until it coats the back of a spoon. Adjust salt and pepper, return the oxtail to the sauce and rest it 15 minutes before serving with fried potatoes or mash. Close both vents of the kamado to put the coals out.

Editor's tips

- Ask the butcher to cut the oxtail into rounds at the vertebrae and of similar size so they all finish together. The thicker, meatier pieces from the base take a little longer than those from the tip.
- If the stew cools a little, spoon off the fat from the surface before reducing the sauce. Oxtail releases a lot, and a sauce left untrimmed is heavy. Made the day before and reheated, the dish improves and the fat lifts off by itself once set.

- With the pot covered and the deflector in, the chamber needs little attention. If the temperature drops below 130 °C open the bottom vent a little more; if it rises above 170 °C close it almost fully along with the top vent and see the temperature problems guide.
- The wine matters: what reduces, concentrates. A harsh or very young red leaves a bitter, astringent sauce. If it ends up sharp, a teaspoon of sugar or a little more carrot rounds it off.

Gear for this recipe

Victoria 31 cm oval Dutch oven: enamelled cocotte with grill-pan lid

Oxtail asks for a pot that traps steam for hours and whose enamel stands up to wine. The Victoria oval 31 cm is 5.7-litre enamelled cast iron, with a lid that doubles as a skillet, and the listing rates it for barbecue and oven. Its long shape lays the pieces in a single layer. Honest drawbacks: it weighs almost 8 kg with the lid, so you need both arms and gloves to move it, and the 5.7 litres cap the recipe at about 1.6 kg of oxtail. The listing warns against sudden temperature changes, so always add the stock hot.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/victoria-horno-holandes-ovalado-31-esmaltado

Rösle leather barbecue gloves: long, one size

This recipe moves a pot of almost 8 kg with the chamber at 150 °C, and every opening of the kamado is done with a burp. The Rösle leather gloves are certified leather with a cotton and polyester lining, 41.5 cm long, and cover hand and forearm, which helps when putting the pot in and taking it out. Drawback: the listing gives no maximum temperature and they cannot be washed, so the leather will pick up grease, and you should not handle a wet pot with them.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/rosle-guantes-cuero-barbacoa

Kamado Joe Classic III 18"

The braise needs a kamado that holds 150 °C for four hours with very little attention and has room for an oval pot. The 18-inch Kamado Joe Classic III has a grate of about 46 cm, so the 31 cm pot sits comfortably on the deflector. The thick ceramic holds temperature with the vents nearly closed. Drawback: it is a heavy kamado and hard to move, and with a large pot the space above is reduced, so nothing else fits on the grate at the same time.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-joe-classic-iii

Jealous Devil 100% White Quebracho lump charcoal 15.8 kg

Four hours at 150 °C call for a charcoal that lasts and leaves little ash so as not to choke the fire. Jealous Devil is quebracho blanco lump charcoal, a dense wood, and its listing puts ash at around 3 %. With a full firebox at the start it is enough for the whole recipe without refuelling. Drawback: it is a very powerful charcoal, and for 150 °C you must open the vents only slightly from the start; if it overshoots, it is hard to bring back down.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/jealous-devil-quebracho-lump-charcoal

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/rabo-de-toro-estofado-cocotte-kamado

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