

INGREDIENTS:

1 Kilo (or a little more) of oxtail
Handful of dried porcini mushrooms
150g fine polenta
2 thinly-sliced onions
1 teaspoon five-spice powder
4 tablespoons olive oil
500ml water
1 tablespoon cornflour
1 vegetable stock cube or capsule
500ml milk
1 egg
50g freshly-grated Parmesan
Sea salt
Freshly-ground black pepper
500ml boiling water

TIME: 50 mins + 24 hrs**SERVING:** 4 people

Place the mushrooms in a bowl, add the boiling water and soak for 15 minutes. Remove and chop into small pieces. Strain the liquid through a sieve lined with kitchen paper. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed casserole and brown the onions and oxtail. Add the spice, stock cube, mushrooms and their cooking water and top up with enough cold water to almost cover the meat. Cover and simmer for two and a half hours. Remove the meat from the bones and arrange with the mushroom pieces in an oven-proof dish. Skim the fat off the cooking liquor. Mix the cornflour with a little water then whisk into the liquor. Pour over the meat until just covered. Heat the oven to 200C gas mark 6. Bring the milk and water to the boil in a heavy-bottomed pan and sprinkle in the polenta, stirring with a wooden spatula as you do, then cook over a low flame for five minutes. Away from the flame beat in the egg. Spread the mix over the meat, sprinkle with Parmesan and bake for 20 minutes.

Enjoy! Malcolm & Julie Pyne

YOUR NOTES: