

MASTER RECIPE: RENE VERDON'S LEMON POT ROAST

From "White House Chef Cookbook," by Rene Verdon, who presided over the White House kitchens during the Kennedy administration (and was later a San Francisco restaurateur). It is important to use a very heavy casserole with a tight-fitting lid (enameled cast iron is traditional) so the meat will cook slowly and steadily. A wide, flat piece of beef is preferable for this dish, tied with string if necessary to hold its shape.

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Zest of 1 lemon, cut in 1 x 3-inch strips
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped yellow onion
- 1 garlic clove, peeled, sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried, crumbled thyme
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- A 3 ¼- to 4-pound top sirloin or cross-rib beef roast
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, or brown rice flour
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch dissolved in ¼ cup cold water

INSTRUCTIONS:

Combine the lemon juice, lemon zest, onion, garlic, salt, pepper and thyme; set aside.

Heat the butter and oil in a heavy casserole. Pat the meat dry with paper towels and rub with the flour. Add to the casserole and slowly brown to a rich mahogany color on all sides, 10 to 15 minutes.

Add the lemon mixture, cover tightly, and simmer over very low heat until tender, about 1 ½ hours, turning the meat halfway through the cooking time. (The internal temperature should reach 155°.)

The beef will produce about 1 cup of rich juices.

Remove the meat and keep warm.

Strain the juices into a small bowl and place in the freezer for a few minutes so the fat will rise to the surface. Remove and discard the fat.

Reheat the sauce and stir in the cornstarch mixture. Let bubble for 30 seconds, until the gravy thickens and clears. Taste, and adjust seasoning if necessary.

Carve the meat into thin slices and top with the gravy.

Serves 4 with leftovers.

PER SERVING: 695 calories, 70 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 42 g fat (17 g saturated), 212 mg cholesterol, 747 mg sodium, 0 g fiber.