

This is from our late friend Chef Jan Birnbaum when he had his restaurant, Catahoula, in Calistoga. We miss both.

“Catahoula’s Short Ribs in New Orleans Red Gravy is not loved just because it is such a natural with Storybook Zinfandel, but it sure helps. The feeling we try to create at Catahoula is one that you can feel at home enough to enjoy your ribs with your fingers. We came to Calistoga because we were tired of living in cities for the last 20 years where we never knew our next-door neighbors. That is impossible in Napa because your neighbor is probably trying to sell you wine.” – Jan Birnbaum

Smokey Beef Short Ribs with New Orleans Red Gravy

6-8 Beef Short Ribs cut 1 ½ English Cut
8 cups Flour
4 Tbs. Cayenne
4 Tbs. Hot Paprika
½ cup Olive Oil
4 large Yellow Onions, chopped ½”
2-6 Jalapenos, destemmed and cut in slices
15 Ripe Roma Tomatoes
½ btl Red Wine
8 cups Coffee reduced to 4 cups
Salt and Pepper to taste
1 Tbs. Toasted Cumin Seeds, ground
3 Bay Leaves
8 cups Chicken Stock
4 Tbs. Red Wine Vinegar

Marinade:

1 lb. Basil
15 Garlic Cloves
½ cup Olive Oil

Marinate: In a food processor, pulse the garlic until chopped. All the basil, stems and all, and pulse until chopped. Add the olive oil and pulse for a second to mix. Rub this mixture all over the ribs and let sit at least 3 hours, but overnight is preferred.

Season the ribs generously with salt and pepper.

Mix the cayenne and paprika into the flour.

Dust the seasoned ribs in the seasoned flour

In half a cup of olive oil sear the ribs until brown and crispy all over. Remove the ribs. Add cut onions. Continue to cook 15-30 minutes or until onions begin to caramelize. Add tomatoes and allow to cook for 15 minutes. Add all the remaining ingredients and return ribs to the pot. Simmer for 2 hours, covered. Remove the ribs from the pot. Puree all the stock and solids together. Add red wine vinegar. Adjust to desired consistency with chicken stock.

Serve with roasted potatoes, sautéed greens, and Zinfandel!