

Spiced, Braised Short Ribs with Creamy Potatoes

Serves 6–8

The last step before serving, wherein the perfectly tender and adequately cooked short ribs are uncovered to crisp up the ribs and potatoes and further thicken and reduce the sauce increases cooking time by about 30-ish minutes, which is the best 30-ish minutes you'll ever spend, I promise. These are a lot, flavor and texture-wise, and but because they are a one-pot meat and potatoes kind of dish, they don't need much more than a good tangy salad and a light, maybe chilled, red wine.

5 lbs. bone-in short ribs, at least 1.5" thick
Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
1 ½ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes (other small, waxy potatoes are fine too), quartered lengthwise
1 large yellow onion, sliced or quartered if small
6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
4 whole chili de arbol (or 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper), plus more for serving
2 tablespoons cumin seeds
2 tablespoons fennel seed
1 tablespoon coriander seed
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons tomato paste
½ cup white wine vinegar
3 cups beef or chicken broth (or bouillon dissolved in 3 cups of water, or just 3 cups of water)
2 lemons, seeds removed, thinly sliced, divided
3 cups cilantro, tender leaves and stems, coarsely chopped, divided

1. Season short ribs with salt and lots of pepper. If you can do this the day before, even better.
2. Preheat oven to 325°. Heat canola oil in a large (at least 8 qt) dutch oven over medium heat. Sear short ribs until deeply golden brown all on all sides, about 5 minutes per side. Using tongs, transfer short ribs to a large serving platter or rimmed baking sheet.
3. Carefully (the pot is hot!) drain fat from the pot, leaving behind any of the good bits.
4. Add potatoes, cut side down, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, without disturbing, until they're nicely browned on one side, about 5 minutes. Give them a stir and continue to cook until browned a little more evenly.
5. Using a slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to the tray with the meat, leaving any bits and fat behind.

6. Add onions and garlic to the pot and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until the onions have a nice golden brown color to them, 5–8 minutes. Add chili de Arbol, cumin, fennel, coriander, and cinnamon, stirring to coat and toast the spices.
7. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until it's started to caramelize on the bottom of the pot (adjust the heat as needed to make sure it doesn't burn before it caramelizes), about 2 minutes.
8. Add broth and vinegar, and bring to a simmer, scraping up all the bits on the bottom of the pot.
9. Return short ribs and potatoes to the pot, nestling everything in (if it doesn't all seem to fit, it will; but if not everything is submerged, just make sure the short ribs get priority seating on the braise train, which is to say make sure they are submerged even if the potatoes are not) and scatter with half the lemon.
10. Cover and place pot in the oven until short ribs are falling off the bone tender and potatoes are impossibly creamy to the point of almost mush (but not yet mush), 2 ½–3 hours.
11. Increase oven temperature to 425° and remove the lid. Continue to cook until short ribs and any potatoes on top are browned and starting to crisp and the liquid has reduced to a very nice, rich sauce, 25–35 minutes.
12. Remove from heat and scatter with remaining lemon and cilantro, plus a bit of crumbled chili before serving.