**Ox Tail in Tomato Sauce**

Ox tail is a dish I have grown up with and have loved ever since. My father, Thomas Fong, made it for us on a regular basis when I was a youth. It has become my favorite dish, and one which I would have as my last meal on this world as a mortal. Call it Ed's last supper if you like.

Thomas made it "Roman" style, but he would not have known that. The dish was prepared with tomatoes, egg white and ginger, so it certainly had Cantonese influences. Heck, I only knew it was Romanesque when I visited Rome in 2011 and tasted the "coda" there.

I proclaimed to my sister, brother in law and Annabelle "This is just like my father used to make!" I found out it was a local specialty, and had ox tail three times over the next few days. So yes, I am fixated and passionate about this dish.

My father has not made this dish for decades, and has long since forgot how. I have tried to recreate it, and this recipe is a close as I have come. However, in my mind, I always journey back to my Dad's, as it has a very special place in my heart.

I have not spent Christmas dinner with my parents in years. They no longer cook much, and I travel. Being in retail, I tend to escape the hustle and bustle of the season, and seek solice in quiter places, like Las Vegas. But before I leave, I like to cook this dish in December for friends I would have over for our festive season meal. Nothing like breaking bread and sharing the dish I love with good friends!

I hope you enjoy this dish as much as I do.

\* Use Rega DOP San Marzano Tomatos (from the Italian Centre) and regular Aylmer's Whole Tomatos in a 50:50 ratio

If you like less acidity, use less of the San Marzano tomatos, or simply adjust with a few sprinkles of sugar.

\* 2 kgs of ox tail, trimmed of loose fat and silver skin. The halal ox tail from Lucky 97 is the best I have found. Try to buy them in a uniform size as the pieces will cool more evenly. The halal meat is a bit more expensive, but you will not have to trim any waste off.

\* 1 jumbo Spanish onion, chopped coarsely

\* 7 sections of Elephant Garlic, pressed

\* 375ml of dry white wine

\* 2 cups of Crimini or other white button mushrooms, sliced

\* If possible, use the following fresh herbs: 2 sprigs of rosemary, 3 bay leaves and to taste, oregano & thyme Herbs should be finely chopped.

\* Olive oil

\* Salt and pepper to taste

Pre-heat oven to 375F

1. In a large frying pan or wok, brown the trimmed and washed ox tail. Carmelizing the meat will add to the rich flavors of the dish. Put the browned meat into a large pot that will your cooking vessel that will go into your oven.

2. Brown the Spanish onion in olive oil. When it is almost done, add the pressed garlic. Season with salt and fresh ground black pepper. Add the browned onions and garlic to the ox tail.

3. Sautee and brown the mushrooms in olive oil. Season with salt and add to the ox tails.

4. In the pot containing the ox tail, onion/garlic and mushrooms, add the whole canned San Marzano and Aylmer's tomatos. Crush and break down the tomatos while mixing the ingredients.

5. Add the freshly chopped herbs.

6. Add up to 375ml of white wine to the ingredients and mix well. Most of the ox tail should be covered in liquid at this point.

7. Add fresh cracked black pepper and salt to taste. This is a personal thing, so I cannot recommend how much you season. I like to addlots of pepper, and adjust the salt as the dsih is cooking.

Cook the ox tail in the oven for 3.5 to 4 hours. The pot should be covered. After 2 hours, take the pot out of the oven, stir the contents, and taste to see if salt needs to be added. Repeat procedure after 3 hours. At this point, the meat should be getting softer. A fork should be able to pierce the meat.

After 3 hours of cooking, begin the deglazing process. All the fat that floats to the top should be removed. The sauce/gravy should be of a thicker consistency.

After 3.5 hours of cooking, deglaze again and taste to see if salt needs to be added. If the sauce is a bit thin, remove the lid.

The ox tail stew should be ready after 4 hours of cooking time. If the pieces are still dark in color and not tender, the ox tail is too old and will never be cooked to a tender consistency.

The sauce should be of a nice thick consistency at this stage. If it is not, take the meat of out the pot and set aside. Reduce the sauceover the stove top to thicken.

Serve over pappardelle noodles or a pasta or rice of your choice.