ITALIAN (TUSCANY)

Stracotto di Manzo

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Involved	**6**	**25 min**	**3 hr 30 min**	**Braise**	**Blade & cross rib roast**

Ingredients

- 1.5 kg (3⅓ lb) blade or cross rib roast, in one piece
- 1½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 375 ml (1½ cups) Chianti or other dry red wine
- 400 g (14 oz) canned whole tomatoes, crushed
- 250 ml (1 cup) beef stock
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 4 sage leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- Polenta or mashed potatoes, to serve

Steps

1. Heat the oven to 150°C (300°F). Dry the beef, then season it all over with salt and pepper, ideally 1 hour ahead.
2. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a heavy ovenproof pot over medium-high heat. Sear the roast for 4 to 5 minutes per side until richly browned all around. Move it to a plate.
3. Lower the heat to medium and add the remaining oil with the onion, carrot and celery. Cook for 8 minutes until soft and lightly golden. Add the garlic and tomato paste for 1 minute.
4. Pour in the wine and deglaze, simmering for 3 to 4 minutes until reduced by half.
5. Add the tomatoes, stock, rosemary, sage and bay. Nestle the beef back in. The liquid should come about halfway up the meat.
6. Cover and braise in the oven for 3 to 3½ hours, turning the roast every hour, until the meat is meltingly tender and a fork slides in easily.
7. Lift out the beef. Skim the fat from the sauce, remove the herbs, and simmer the sauce on the stovetop for 10 minutes until thick. Slice or shred the beef and spoon the sauce over.

Notes

- **Serving:** on soft polenta, or toss the shredded beef with pappardelle for a ragù.
- **Make ahead:** the roast is easier to slice neatly when chilled overnight in its sauce. Keeps 3 to 4 days; freezes 3 months. Reheat until steaming hot.
- **Wine:** any dry red you like works, but Chianti is traditional.
- **Slow cooker:** cut the roast into 3 or 4 pieces if needed, brown and make the sauce in the pot, then cook on low for 8 to 9 hours or high for 5. Reduce the sauce on the stove.

- **Chef's touch:** off the heat, whisk 1 tbsp cold butter into the reduced sauce. It gives the sauce a silky gloss.
- **Twist:** for a non-traditional umami boost, melt 3 anchovy fillets into the oil with the onions; they dissolve and taste savoury, not fishy.