



ITALIAN (ROME)

Coda alla Vaccinara

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Involved	6	30 min	4 hr	Braise	Oxtail

Ingredients

- 1.8 kg (4 lb) oxtail, cut into segments
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 60 g (2 oz) pancetta or guanciale, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 120 ml (½ cup) dry white wine
- 800 g (28 oz) can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 250 ml (1 cup) water or stock
- 1 tsp salt, plus more to taste
- Pinch of ground cloves
- Pinch of chilli flakes
- 6 celery stalks, cut into 8 cm (3 in) lengths
- 30 g (¼ cup) pine nuts, toasted
- 30 g (¼ cup) raisins, soaked in warm water
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder (optional, for the traditional sweet-sour finish)

Steps

1. Heat the oil in a heavy pot over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook 5 minutes until the fat renders and the pieces turn golden.
2. Raise to medium-high and sear the oxtail in batches until deeply browned, about 4 minutes per side. Move to a plate.
3. Cook the onion and garlic in the pot for 5 minutes until soft, then pour in the wine and deglaze, scraping the base.
4. Return the oxtail. Add tomatoes, water, salt, cloves and chilli. Cover and braise on low heat for 3 to 3½ hours, stirring now and then, until the meat is nearly falling off the bone.
5. Simmer the celery in lightly salted water for 10 minutes until just tender; drain.
6. Add the celery to the oxtail with the pine nuts, drained raisins and cocoa. Cook uncovered over low heat for 20 minutes, until the sauce is thick and glossy.
7. Taste for salt and serve with plenty of bread.

Notes

- **Make ahead:** the flavour deepens overnight; reheat gently with a splash of water. Keeps 3–4 days, or freeze 3 months and reheat until steaming hot.
- **Serving:** leftover sauce is superb tossed with rigatoni.
- **Shortcut:** skip the cocoa and the stew is still delicious; the sweet-sour finish is a Roman signature.
- **Slow cooker:** brown the oxtail and pancetta, build the sauce, then cook on low 8–9 hr. Add the celery, nuts and raisins at the end and reduce lid off on high for 30 minutes.
- **Pair with:** a crisp chicory salad dressed with lemon and olive oil to cut the richness.