

Chicken Cacciatore

Ingredients:

20 chicken thighs (bone-in with skin)
1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil
3-4 large sweet onions, chopped thick
1 cup sweet Marsala
6-7 bell peppers, chopped thick
3 cloves of garlic, sliced thick
6 35oz cans of whole peeled plum tomatoes
5 Tablespoons salt
6 bay leaves
4 Tablespoons of dried basil
2 teaspoons of dried oregano
6-8 springs of fresh thyme
flour for dredging
10 Italian sweet fennel sausages (optional, but highly recommended)



Instructions:

Add the olive oil to a large 16-quart pot over medium heat. Dredge chicken thighs in flour and brown on both sides. If adding sausage, twist each link in half and cut to make 20 tiny links. Brown these along with the chicken thighs in small batches, usually 4 of each at a time. When the meat is browned, remove and set aside. Add the onions and cook until translucent, stirring frequently. Add the Marsala and cook until the wine is evaporated, about 5 minutes. (I like to use Colombo fine sweet Marsala.) Add the peppers and garlic. Stir to combine.

In a separate bowl, crush the tomatoes by hand, or scissor with a pair of knives, then add to the pot. (I prefer Cento “Italian Peeled Tomatoes”.) Add the salt and herbs, stir to combine.

Return the meat, with its juices, to the pot. I add a layer of 7-6 thighs and the same number sausage on top. Repeat this process making sure to press each layer down a bit into the pot. Once all of the meat is added, reduce the heat to a simmer.

Cook with the lid ajar. After 30 minutes you can begin to press the meats further down into the sauce. Repeat this process every 30 minutes or so, making sure that the sauce is not boiling. This is a sweet sauce, so stir frequently so that the bottom doesn't burn.

Simmer for 3-4 hours until the chicken is tender and easily comes away from the bone. Serve with plenty of crusty bread for sopping up the sauce. Leftovers are better the following day.

This also freezes well. I portion 2 thighs, 2 sausages, and 4 ladles of sauce in a 1 gallon Glad zipper freezer bag, then stack them in the freezer. They'll easily keep for 4-6 months. Thaw in a sink full of hot water and then reheat in a saucepan just before serving.

Serves 20