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Chef John Gifaldi's

PEPOSA (TUSCAN SHORT RIBS)

SERVES: 6

SHORT RIBS:

6 (8-10 oz) beef short ribs

1 tbsp kosher salt

8 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed

1 tbsp tomato paste

2 tbsp whole black peppercorns, freshly crushed

1 tbsp freshly ground black pepper

3 fresh sage leaves

3 small fresh rosemary sprigs

2 bay leaves

2 cups Chianti or other dry red wine

salt, to taste

FOR SERVING:

creamy polenta

crusty Italian bread

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place the short ribs in a large mixing bowl and season generously on all sides with the kosher salt.

2. In a mortar, combine the garlic and a pinch of kosher salt. Using a pestle, mash into a smooth paste. Add the tomato paste and mix until well blended.

3. Rub the garlic-tomato mixture evenly over the meat. Sprinkle with the crushed peppercorns and ground black pepper.

4. Transfer the meat to a deep skillet or Dutch oven. Tuck the sage leaves, rosemary sprigs, and bay leaves around and between the pieces of meat. Carefully pour in the wine.

5. Place the pan over high heat and bring the liquid to a gentle simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover tightly, and cook for about 3½ hours, turning the meat every 30 minutes, until fork-tender.

6. Remove the meat and transfer it to a warm plate. Remove and discard the bay leaves.

7. Increase the heat to high and bring the braising liquid to a boil. Cook for 8-10 minutes, until reduced by about half and slightly thickened. Season with salt to taste.

8. Return the meat to the pan. Reduce the heat to medium-low and spoon the sauce over the meat. Cook for about 5 minutes, until heated through.

9. Serve over the creamy polenta with the crusty Italian bread for soaking up the rich sauce.

CHEF'S NOTES:

1. Crack the pepper coarsely. Freshly cracked black pepper is the star of the dish. Pre-ground pepper won't give the same aroma or depth.

2. A dry red such as a Chianti works beautifully.

3. Make it a day ahead if possible. Peposa is one of those dishes that tastes even better the next day.