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by Liz Robb

Paprika Chicken

Ingredients

4-5 large ripe vine tomatoes
2 medium onions
1 red pepper
1 green pepper
2 fat cloves of garlic
1 kg chicken thighs
2 tablespoons of olive oil
15g butter
Salt and freshly milled black pepper
1 heaped tablespoon of hot Hungarian paprika
1 heaped tablespoon of plain flour
250-300ml chicken stock
A large handful of fresh parsley
150ml soured cream
400g fresh egg pappardella pasta

Preparation

1. Score the tomatoes all the way around with a sharp knife, starting at the top, then repeat at right angles. Submerge in boiling water for about 30 seconds then pour off the water and peel off the skins. Chop into small pieces and set to one side.
2. Peel and halve the onions then slice into thick strips. Deseed the peppers, cut them into large pieces then chop into thick strips. Peel the cloves of garlic.
3. Remove the skin from the chicken thighs. Heat the oil and butter together in a large, wide heavy bottomed frying pan and brown the chicken for about 6 minutes, turning half way through. Remove with a slotted spoon, season each piece with salt and black pepper and then set aside.
4. Turn down the heat a little under the pan and sauté the onions for 3 minutes, then add the crushed garlic and cook gently for another 2 minutes.
5. Sprinkle the paprika and the flour into the pan and stir into the onions and garlic for just a minute
6. don't allow the paprika to scorch.
7. Gradually stir in 250ml. of the hot chicken stock [reserving 50ml to add later if needed], add the prepared peppers and tomatoes and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
8. Return the chicken thighs to the pan, cover them with the sauce and gently simmer for about 75 minutes, or until the chicken is tender and almost falling from the bone.
9. Finely chop the parsley. Remove the pan from the heat, carefully lift out the chicken onto a warm plate and stir most of the parsley and then the soured cream into the sauce. Adjust the seasoning to taste and add a little more stock if needed. Return the chicken to the sauce.
10. Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet and drain well. Serve the chicken and sauce on a bed of pappardella, garnished with a sprinkling of parsley.
11. This dish also tastes great with rice or noodles instead of pasta, or even with mashed potatoes or sweet potato wedges and fresh green vegetables.

Cooks Note

My daughter recently returned from Budapest with a lovely gift of Hungarian paprika, a wonderful traditional seasoning for stews and soups which is also used as a garnish and sprinkled raw onto foods. So I couldn't wait to try it, and this recipe is the result.

Paprika can vary enormously in colour and flavour, ranging from mild and sweet to really hot, and you can buy smoked paprika too. The Hungarian variety that I used was very hot so I restricted it to one tablespoonful; you may wish to increase the quantity if you have a milder version, or add a little cayenne pepper too. The addition of soured cream at the end of the cooking time tempers the heat a little, giving a rich, spicy and creamy dish: yum! Makes 4 generous portions.