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| Red Wine Beef with Bacon Crunch |
| **Ingredients:** |
| 2kg (4½lb) | Diced Beef or beef, divided into 2 pieces |
| 450g (1lb) | Button onions |
| 600g (1lb 5 oz) | Button mushrooms |
| 1 bottle | Red wine |
| 2 Tablespoon | Soft brown or demerara sugar |
| 2 x 400ml (14fl oz) | Tins of beef consommé or stock |
| 2  | Bay leaves |
| 2 | Sprigs of thyme |
| 12  | Rashers of steaky bacon |
| 1½ Teaspoon | Cornflour (optional), loosened with a little water |
| 1 Pinch (each) | Salt and pepper |
| 1 Tablespoon | Flour for dusting |
| 2 Tablespoons | Vegetable oil for cooking |
| A Handful | Roughly chopped curly parsley (optional) |
| **Directions:** |
| Preheat the oven to 160ºC/325ºF/Gas 3. |
| Season the beef and dust with flour. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large braising pot. Once hot, colour the beef on all sides before removing from the pot. |
| Dab away the majority of oil left in the pot with kitchen paper, leaving just a trickle. Add the onions and fry gently until golden brown. Increase the heat and add the mushrooms, stirring once or twice before pouring in the wine with the sugar. Bring to the boil and allow to evaporate until just half the liquid is left. |
| Put the meat back in the pot, pour in the consommé and top up with 400ml (14fl oz) water. Return to a simmer and add the bay leaves and thyme. Cover with a lid and braise for 2 hours before turning the joint. Return to the oven and continue to braise for a further 1½ hours. |
| Meanwhile, put the bacon on a baking tray and top with another tray. Place in the oven while braising the beef, checking after 10 minutes. If not deep brown and crispy, continue to bake. Once cooked, transfer to a wire rack. |
| Once the beef is cooked, remove the joint, onions and mushrooms from the pot and keep warm to one side, skimming off any excess fat from the gravy. Strain the gravy and re-boil, reducing by a third in volume for a rich, beefy, red-wine flavour. If a thicker consistency is preferred, thicken with the cornflour, whisking a little at a time into the source. Season with salt and pepper. |
| Slice or break the meat into chunky pieces and return to the sauce with the onions and mushrooms. Serve with the bacon sitting on top and sprinkled with the parsley. |



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| Source: Gary Rhodes |