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venison casserole with no-suet dumplings recipe

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This is a recipe by my twin sister Jane, and it's one of my favourite winter meals. The secret of this casserole is to let everything steep for a day. This brings out the flavour and makes the meat meltingly tender.

Serves 8-10

- 400g bag of small shallots, peeled
- olive oil
- 250g bacon or pancetta lardons
- 4 large flat mushrooms, sliced
- 1½ kg venison, cut into chunks
- 3 tablespoons plain flour, seasoned with a little salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon crushed juniper berries
- 1 tablespoon crushed coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon redcurrant jelly
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, such as rosemary, thyme and marjoram
- 750ml bottle of red wine
- 2 x 400ml tins of beef consomme
- salt and black pepper

For 12 medium dumplings:

- 200g plain flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 4 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 small pinch of ground cloves
- 1 small pinch of allspice
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives
- 1 teaspoon salt
- pinch of black pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- 120ml milk

Method

Fry the whole shallots in a couple of tablespoons of olive oil until they begin to soften. Add the lardons and mushrooms and cook for about 5 minutes more. Transfer to a casserole that has a lid. Roll the meat chunks in the seasoned flour and fry in the same pan until seared on each side. Transfer to the casserole and add all the remaining ingredients up to and including the salt and pepper. Cover and put aside to marinate for at least 12 hours.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas mark 4. Cook the covered casserole for 1 ½ hours.

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Meanwhile, make the dumplings. Sift the flour and baking powder into a large bowl. Add the parmesan, spices, chives, salt and pepper. Mix in the egg and milk a little at a time. If the dough is a bit sticky, add some extra flour. Using wet hands, form the mixture into 12 small balls.

Take the casserole out of the oven 15 minutes before the end of the cooking time and add the dumplings, arranging them evenly over the top. Cover and cook for 5 minutes, then uncover and cook for 10 more minutes so that the dumplings brown.

This recipe appears on p382 of Sarah's [Food for Friends and Family](#) cookbook.

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