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[Château Celebration](#)

Coq au Vin

8 SERVINGS

For many years, Lydie prepared Coq au Vin for her husband's birthday using year-old roosters. The birds were tough and took hours to cook, but she loved the sauce they made. Then the farmer she bought from started giving his birds hormones, and his rooster became just another chicken. Lydie had to come up with an alternative. Now she makes an intense cooking liquid with enriched chicken stock and wine that's boiled down to concentrate the flavor.

2 cups full-bodied red wine, such as Côtes-du-Rhône or Zinfandel

1 tablespoon tomato paste

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Two 3 1/2-pound chickens, each cut into 8 pieces

Salt and freshly ground pepper

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

3 cups [Enriched Chicken Stock](#)

1 bouquet garni, made with 5 parsley sprigs, 1 large thyme sprig and 1 bay leaf, tied in cheesecloth

1/3 pound slab bacon, cut into 1/4-inch dice

1/2 pound small white mushrooms, quartered

1. In a large skillet, bring the wine to a boil over high heat. Remove the skillet from the heat and, using a long match, ignite the wine. When the flames subside, whisk in the tomato paste.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in another large skillet. Season the chicken pieces with salt and

pepper. Add half of the chicken to the skillet and cook over moderately high heat until lightly browned all over, about 12 minutes; transfer to a large enameled cast-iron casserole. Repeat with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and the rest of the chicken pieces.

3. Pour off all but 3 tablespoons of the fat in the skillet and whisk in the flour; cook over moderate heat, whisking occasionally, until chestnut colored, about 4 minutes. Add the chicken stock and wine and bring to a boil, whisking. Pour the liquid over the chicken in the casserole. Tuck in the bouquet garni and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook over low heat until the chicken is cooked through, about 25 minutes for the breasts and 35 minutes for the drumsticks, thighs and wings. Transfer the chicken to a large platter as it is done; cover loosely with foil and keep warm.

4. Set half of the casserole over the heat and bring the sauce to a boil. Skim the fat from the side that isn't boiling and continue to boil until the sauce is reduced to about 2 cups and slightly thickened, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and keep warm.

5. Meanwhile, in the skillet, cook the bacon over moderate heat until crisp, 6 to 7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. Pour the fat into a glass measuring cup and wipe out the skillet. Add 1 tablespoon of the bacon fat to the skillet along with the mushrooms and cook over moderately high heat, stirring frequently, until softened and golden, about 7 minutes. Scatter the bacon and mushrooms over the chicken and serve right away, passing the sauce separately.

MAKE AHEAD The recipe can be prepared through Step 4 and refrigerated overnight. Rewarm in the sauce.

SERVE WITH Steamed potatoes.

WINE A hearty red with good fruit will echo the chicken's winey flavor. Look for the 1998 Château Mont-Redon Côtes-du-Rhône or the 1998 Rosenblum Harris Kratka Vineyard Zinfandel.

--*Lydie Marshall*

This recipe originally appeared in December 2000.