



## **Pigs Head – An unusual ingredient but with loads of options.**

In these days of tighten budgets and conserving cash the need to shop cost effectively is important. I am looking at how to use cheaper cuts of meat and how to turn them into tasty good food that you can not only serve for yourself but also for friends.

I experimented with an unusual ingredient recently, a pigs head. Now you may be a bit squeamish about working with an ingredient like this but you can ask your butcher to take the meat off of the head and include the tongue as well. However, if you want to have a go at working with the pigs head then ensure that you have a sharp filleting knife and a shorter knife for getting into some of the awkward parts of the head.

The ingredients for this recipe are:-

Pigs Head  
2 Carrots chopped  
4 sticks celery chopped  
1 start anise  
1 onion chopped  
1 leek chopped  
2 cloves of garlic  
half bottle white wine  
water to cover



### **Serve with**

Cherry or small plum tomatoes – roast in oven for 15 minutes  
Mashed potato

### **Sauce to serve with**

16 Caperberries  
Reduced brown or veal stock

The head is relatively easy to work with, having a sharp knife is essential. Start under the head and in the middle of the lower jaw make a cut from the neck to the end of the jaw. Start working the knife removing the meat from the bone but do this carefully as you want to end up with a single piece of meat that you can roll up as a joint. Also take care not to tear the skin. Having eased the meat away from one side of the head, repeat with the other side. When you have the meat in one piece trim the ears off at the level of the skin. Try not to cut through the meat as you will end up with two holes in the meat. Remove any hairs, especially around the mouth with a razor blade or cooks blow torch.



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The next stage, having removed the meat from your pigs head is to season and roll the joint, wrapping it with clingfilm. Ensure that you have all the trimmings including the tongue sliced up into pieces laid inside the joint. At this point you can season the joint with salt and pepper. IF you like you can season with additional flavours, such as sage, marjoram or ginger and coriander. These add an extra twist on the flavour of the end dish.



Roll as tightly as you can. If you have a fish kettle you should be able to lay the joint inside the kettle. If not use a deep oven proof dish. Place the rolled joint into the dish, cover with the white wine, chopped vegetables and water. Cover and place in a preheated oven (140C) for 4-5 hours (an hour less if using a fan oven).

When cooked let the pig cool and remove from the dish when you can handle the rolled joint. You will find that the joint has expanded and stretched the clingfilm. Remove the clingfilm and roll it again more tightly. Ensure that the meat is watertight as you will need to chill it down in iced cold water.

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Once your rolled joint is cooled you can then slice it in to portions (ideally 1-2 inches thick). Pan fry these and when sufficiently browned put in the oven to crisp the skin. While you are doing this prepare some mashed potato. Also roast the tomatoes in a foil wrapper with a bit of oil and seasoning.



For the sauce reduce the stock down from 500ml to 250ml and warm the caperberries in the reduction before pouring on the meat. You can serve the dish with vegetables that are in season.

You can vary the sauce by taking some stock (chicken or ham) reducing it down, adding a little Calvados and then add the caperberries, thicken if required with some butter or a little cornflour.

Place the potato on the plate and place the meat on top, cover with the tomatoes and sauce.



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An alternative is to stuff the joint with a mix of pork mince, freshly chopped herbs and diced apple with a hint of Calvados. Here is the recipe:-

300g pork mince  
3 tablespoons of chopped herbs, parsley, sage, rosemary etc  
1 diced onion  
2 tablespoons of Calvados  
Salt and pepper

Mix the mince with the herbs, put the onion in a frying pan and when the onion has gone slightly golden and translucent add them with the Calvados to the mince. Season and mix well.

Spread the mince across the pig meat when its laid out before being rolled. Then follow the cooking from when the rolled joint is poached.

This dish is very cost effective. The pigs head should cost £2.50 as is or a bit more if the butcher prepares it for you. The pigs ears can be slow roasted and there you have a doggie treat! My two terriers had a treat the day after I tried this recipe. They were very happy!

I hope that you try this recipe and let me know how you get on.

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