

# Roast Haunch of Venison

- 1-1 ½ kg/2-3 lb haunch of venison
- 175 g/6 oz bacon or pork fat
- 110 g/4 oz fatty streaky bacon rashers or pork dripping

## for the marinade:

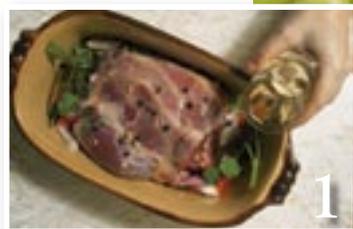
- 250 ml/8 fl oz/1 cup wine vinegar or cider vinegar
- 500 ml/ 16 fl oz/2 cups dry white wine
- 250 ml/8 fl oz/1 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 3 large sprigs parsley
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 6 crushed black peppercorns
- 6 crushed juniper berries
- 1 teaspoon salt

Serves: 4-6  
 Preparation: 20' plus 24-36 hr in the marinade  
 Cooking: 1 ½-2 hr depending on weight of haunch  
 Difficulty: ●●  
 Flavour: ●●  
 Kcal (per serving): 922  
 Proteins (per serving): 44  
 Fats (per serving): 75  
 Nutritional Value: ●●●

Make sure the game dealer removes the outer membrane and draws the sinews from the haunch. Cut the bacon or pork fat into thin strips and use a larding needle to insert these into the haunch. When you have finished, the haunch should have the look of a bald, blunt hedgehog.

1 Mix all the ingredients for the marinade in a large bowl and immerse the haunch completely. It needs at least 8-12 hours to marinate and if you are at all doubtful about the beast's age then give it 24-36 hours in a cool place. Turn the joint frequently in the marinade.

When you are ready to cook the meat, remove it from the marinade and dry it completely with kitchen paper. If using fatty streaky bacon, tie this around the joint so that at least the top is covered.



2 If using pork fat, render it down and paint the joint with about half of the fat. Roast on a rack in a pre-heated oven at 180°C/350°F/ Gas 4 for 20 minutes per 450g/1 lb plus 20 minutes over. With regular basting using the remaining pork fat this should produce a joint still on the rare side (which is the way venison is served in Ireland). If you prefer it well done, roast it for 30 minutes per 450 g/1 lb plus 20 minutes more. If you have a joint that weighs more than 2 kg/4 ½ lb, reduce the cooking time to 15 minutes per 450 g (for rare) and to no more than 25 minutes per 450 g for well done. Allow the joint to rest for 10-15 minutes, then remove the fatty bacon and slice the venison thinly.

A traditional garnish is croutons (thinly-sliced bread fried in a mixture of butter and olive oil until golden and crispy); sea kale is a perfect vegetable accompaniment but celery or cabbage with juniper berries and garlic, or red cabbage are also favourites. Serve the venison with a dish of redcurrant or rowan jelly (see next recipe).

- Wild deer (the native red and the introduced fallow and sitka deer and all their cross-breeds) roam the mountains of Wicklow, Kerry and other highland areas. Venison (deer meat) is so lean that it usually needs to be "larded" to prevent it drying out during roasting or grilling and large joints are usually marinated. Farmed deer is available all year round and tends to be young and tender. However, it is quite usual to marinate farmed venison for a day or two to add flavour.

