

## Coq au Vin

*A great French classic, well worth reviving for its rich and heady flavour. In an interesting modern variation, the traditional red wine is replaced with a dry white such as Chablis, and the dish is garnished with fried croûtes, the edges dipped in finely chopped parsley.*

1 x 2 kg/4 lb oven-ready chicken,  
giblets removed, cut into  
8 pieces  
2 teaspoons dried thyme  
3 tablespoons rapeseed oil  
175 g/6 oz rindless smoked streaky  
bacon rashers, chopped  
16 small pickling onions, blanched  
and peeled  
250 g/8 oz small button mushrooms

3 garlic cloves, crushed  
3 tablespoons Cognac  
350 ml/12 fl oz red wine  
1 bouquet garni  
1 tablespoon butter  
2 tablespoons plain flour  
salt and pepper

TO GARNISH:

fresh thyme (optional)  
fresh parsley (optional)

- 1 Rub the chicken with the dried thyme and pepper. Sauté half the pieces in the oil in a large flameproof casserole for 7-10 minutes until golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside on a plate. Repeat with the remaining chicken.
- 2 Add the bacon to the casserole and cook over a moderate heat, stirring frequently, until the fat runs. Add the onions, mushrooms and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes.
- 3 Gently warm the Cognac in a small saucepan. Return the chicken and its juices to the casserole, pour in the Cognac and set it alight with a match. When the flames subside, add the wine, and bring to the boil, stirring. Add the bouquet garni, salt and pepper to taste. Cover and simmer over a gentle heat, stirring occasionally, for 40 minutes or until the chicken is tender.
- 4 Remove the chicken and vegetables with a slotted spoon and keep hot. Discard the bouquet garni. Mix the butter and flour to a paste and add to the sauce a little at a time until evenly blended. Bring to the boil and simmer, stirring, for 2-3 minutes until the sauce thickens. Adjust the seasoning to taste.
- 5 Serve the chicken and vegetables with the sauce spooned over, and garnished with thyme and parsley if liked.

### Serves 4

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: about 50 minutes

