

BRAISED HEART, MIDDLE-EAST STYLE

Cooking time: Prep-35 min. Oven-4 hrs.

- 2-4 lb. (or larger) grass-fed beef heart
- 2 tsp canola or oil (or more as needed)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 large carrots in 1" blocks
- 2 stalks celery, sliced thick
- 3-4 cloves garlic, skinned and crushed
- 1 bunch cilantro, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp each ground ginger and cumin seed (or 3/4 tsp ground cumin)
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/4 c red wine
- 2 c beef or chicken broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 Medjool dates or 6-8 dried apricots, chopped
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 5 or 6-qt enameled cast iron dutch oven, or similar-sized stainless steel covered casserole

Instructions *With grass-fed beef, it's all about cooking **low** and **slow**.*

- Preheat oven to 275-300° F. While the oven is heating, pat the heart dry.
 - Cut the heart lengthwise into large sections so that you can see any vessels and any silver skin (thin membrane on the outside or inside of the heart). With a very sharp knife, carefully remove the silver skin and any protruding vessels.
 - Dice the heart into 1/2-3/4" cubes, and season with salt and pepper.
 - Heat the oil on medium-high and sauté the heart *very, very quickly*. You want the meat to just sizzle a bit, not cook. Immediately remove from pan and set aside. [This step is optional.](#)
 - Sauté the onion and celery over medium heat until just brown.
 - Add the garlic, cilantro, cumin, cinnamon and bay leaf and sauté 30-45 seconds.
 - Deglaze the pan with the wine. Simmer and stir for 2-3 minutes.
 - Add 1 cup of the broth, and continue scraping up the fond at the bottom of the pan.
 - Add the heart to the pan and enough of the remaining stock to come half-way up the meat.
 - Bring to a simmer. Cover the pan and place in the oven to braise for 2 hours.
 - Add the carrots, dates or apricots, and the lemon juice, and braise for an additional 2 hours.
 - Remove the pan from the oven. If you'd like, lift out the heart cubes and set aside in a warm bowl, then reduce the sauce by simmering for 15 minutes. **Do Not** take this step with the beef in the pan, or it will toughen.
 - Turn off the heat, return the beef to the pan and allow to rewarm for 5 minutes.
- Serve with rice, quinoa, couscous or boiled potatoes.