

~~For a good beef braise, choose well-marbled stewing beef—bone-in cuts from the chuck, or front quarter of the cow, which will become tender from slow cooking. Flanken, cross-cut short ribs, make a particularly good braise, as do English-style short ribs, or thick-cut shoulder or chuck steaks. Meaty neck bones, oxtail, and beef cheeks can be prepared the same way, they just require a longer cooking time.~~

~~By the way, French custom dictates a good red wine with a roast, but an outstanding one with a stew.~~

## Watercress, Beet, and Egg Salad

Look for watercress that is dark green, shiny, and utterly alive. If you can't find good watercress, substitute curly endive or a combination of baby spinach, arugula, upland cress, and Belgian endive.

3 bunches watercress	¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 large shallots, finely diced	2 teaspoons grated orange zest
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar	6 medium beets roasted (see Note), peeled, and diced small
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar	6 Soft-Center Hard-Cooked Eggs (page 154)
Salt and pepper	
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard	

Watercress is a little tricky to wash. If the leaves are cut from the stems before washing, they become jumbled and ratty. It is best to leave the bunch of watercress intact, wrapped in its rubber band. Swish the cress vigorously in a basin of cold water, then drain it, still tied, upside down in a colander. Shake the cress over the sink, wrap in a kitchen towel, and refrigerate.

To make the vinaigrette, macerate the diced shallots in a bowl with the vinegars and a good pinch of salt for 10 minutes. Stir in the mustard until dissolved. Whisk in the olive oil, add the orange zest, and grind in some pepper. Taste and adjust for acid and salt. The dressing should be somewhat tart so add more red wine vinegar if necessary.

Put the diced beets in a bowl and season them with salt and pepper. Whisk the vinaigrette and pour it over the beets. Toss the beets in the dressing and leave at room temperature.

To assemble the salad, trim short watercress sprigs from the bunch and make a fluffy pile on a large platter. Scatter the beets over the watercress leaves, distributing the vinaigrette here and there. Carefully cut the eggs into quarters and garnish the salad with them. Just before serving, sprinkle the eggs with salt and pepper.

*serves 8–10*

#### {NOTE ON} ROASTED BEETS

Wash the beets, then put them, unpeeled, in a roasting pan with about an inch of water. Bake, covered, at 350°F for an hour, or until they are easily pierced with a fork. Slip off the skins while the beets are still warm. Roasted beets will keep for 2 or 3 days in the refrigerator.

## ~~Braised Beef with Celery Root Mashed Potatoes~~

~~The goal with a dish like this is tender, succulent meat and a concentrated, well-tempered sauce. Every braise benefits from a night in the refrigerator, so try to make this a day ahead. The only accompaniment I suggest is a potato puree flavored with celery root, which lends a curious perfumed counterpoint.~~