

PORK BELLY WITH LEEKS AND FENNEL

4 PIECES OF PORK BELLY (ABOUT 1/2 LB EACH)
3 MEDIUM LEEKS
1 LARGE FENNEL BULB
GARLIC
STAR ANISE
WHITE WINE
CHICKEN STOCK
PARSLEY

PRE-HEAT OVEN TO 325°

HEAT A LARGE, STEEP-SIDED FRYING PAN ON TOP OF THE STOVE.

DRY THE PORK BELLY WITH PAPER TOWELS. SALT AND PEPPER.

PUT A SPLASH OF OLIVE OIL IN THE PAN AND WHEN IT SMOKES, LAY IN THE PORK BELLY, FAT SIDE DOWN. REDUCE HEAT TO MEDIUM AND BROWN THOROUGHLY ON BOTH SIDES.

MEANWHILE, TRIM THE LEEKS, SLICE LENGTHWISE IN HALF AND WASH OUT ANY GRIT. SLICE EACH HALF LENGTHWISE IN HALF, THEN CUT INTO 2-INCH LENGTHS.

SHAVE THE OUTER LEAVES OF THE FENNEL BULB WITH A VEGETABLE PEELER. SLICE LENGTHWISE IN HALF. WITH A PARING KNIFE REMOVE THE TOUGH WHITE WEDGE IN THE CENTER OF EACH HALF. CUT INTO 1/2 INCH HALF MOONS.

TRIM AND CUT 4 CLOVES OF GARLIC INTO THIN SLICES.

REMOVE THE BROWNEED PORK BELLY FROM THE PAN. POUR OFF ALL BUT 2 TBSPS OF FAT.

ADD ALL THE VEGETABLES TO THE PAN. COVER AND COOK ON A LOW FLAME TILL THE LEEKS AND FENNEL HAVE WILTED A BIT. ABOUT FIVE MINUTES.

RETURN PORK BELLY TO THE PAN, FAT SIDE UP. TOSS IN A COUPLE OF WHOLE STAR ANISE. ADD 1 CUP OF WHITE WINE AND BOIL TILL IT REDUCES BY HALF. POUR IN CHICKEN STOCK TO ALMOST COVER. BRING TO A BOIL.

PARTIALLY COVER PAN AND PLACE IN THE OVEN.

COOK FOR ABOUT 1 1/2 HOURS, CHECKING EVERY 30 MINUTES TO MAKE SURE THE LIQUID HASN'T COOKED OFF. ADD MORE IF NECESSARY. PORK BELLY IS READY WHEN EASILY PIERCED BY A FORK.

ARRANGE ON SEPARATE PLATES. SPOON OVER FENNEL-LEEK MIXTURE. GARNISH WITH ROUGHLY CHOPPED PARSLEY.

SERVES 4