Champagne Cabbage and Apples

Not that I really understand the concept, but some people just do not like sauerkraut—go figure. But I found a solution--a little devious, but a solution nevertheless. And here it is: a braised champagne "kraut," with ginger, caraway, and a goodly amount of tart apples. The secret is rinsing the sauerkraut well under cold water, and then the kraut naysayers will enjoy a plateful extolling the virtues of cabbage, and, of course, champagne. Honestly, whether you like kraut or not, this dish really is a crowd pleaser.

Serves 8

6 tablespoons butter or olive oil

2 slices bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (*optional*)

1 small onion, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger

1 teaspoon minced garlic

3 tart apples, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced

2 jars (2 pounds each) sauerkraut, rinsed in cold water several times and drained

2 cups dry champagne

1 teaspoon caraway seed (*optional*)

Salt and black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a heavy ovenproof pot, melt the butter, and if using, render the bacon for a few minutes. Add the onion, ginger, and garlic. Sauté for 4 minutes. Add the apples and sauté for 2 minutes longer.

Place the rinsed sauerkraut into the pot. Pour in the champagne, caraway seed, salt, and pepper. Toss together and bring to a boil.

Cover tightly and bake in the oven for 1 hour.