

Canard de Jacques à la Poêle

Jacques's Skillet Duck with Parsnips and Shallots

Yield: 4 servings



5 to 5 1/2 pounds duck legs and thighs (5-6 pieces)
3/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
3 large parsnips (about 1 1/2 pounds total), peeled, ends trimmed, sliced into 1-inch pieces
2 cups large whole shallots, peeled
2 heads garlic, cloves (about 30) separated and peeled
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 bay leaves
Chopped fresh cilantro, for garnish
3 to 4 tbsp of duck fat
Chopped pieces of red bell pepper
1 cup of chicken bouillon
Special equipment
A large sauté pan or heavy-bottomed saucepan (12-inch diameter or larger), non-stick preferred, with a tight-fitting cover; a large perforated spoon or skimmer; a large serving platter

Frying the duck

Set the pan over low heat and add the duck fat. Season the duck pieces with 1/2 tsp of the salt and the 1/4 tsp pepper. Lay in all the pieces, skin side down.

Raise the heat to medium to medium-low and cook skin side down and uncovered. The duck skin will shrink and color and lots of fat will accumulate in the pan. Check the underside of the pieces once or twice to make sure they are not burning; lower the heat slightly if necessary. Fry until the skin on all the pieces is well browned and quite crisp; the whole process should take 20 to 25 minutes.

Turn the heat down to low. Leave the duck pieces on their skin—they should be half submerged in fat—and strew the parsnip pieces, shallots, bell pepper, and garlic cloves all around them in the pan. Add the rosemary and bay leaves, and sprinkle over 1/4 tsp of salt. Cover the pan, turn down the heat to low, and cook for 30 minutes. Check occasionally to make sure that the duck is gently steaming; adjust the heat as necessary.

When the duck and vegetables are tender—pierce with a sharp knife to check—turn off the heat. Immediately lift the duck and vegetable pieces from the pan with the spoon or skimmer, allowing the fat to drain, and arrange skin side up on the serving platter.

Pour off the clear duck fat from the pan—you will have 1 1/2 cups or so—and save for other uses. Add 1 cup of chicken bouillon to the pan, bring to a boil, scraping with a wooden spatula to melt all the solidified juice, and pour over the duck. Scatter chopped cilantro over and serve.

A Côtes du Rhône, Syrah, or Grenache-type wine would be good with this dish.