

VENICE

FOUR SEASONS OF HOME COOKING

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RIZZOLI
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DUCK RIGATONI

For 4

Every once in a while I will come across a sauce that is so successful and so tasty that I tend to make it at every opportunity. This one started when the butcher began displaying duck legs at a very reasonable price and I felt compelled to buy a few without much of an idea what to do with them. It turned out duck ragù is locally traditional and, after a few tweaks, this recipe produced a most effective sauce. As with many Venetian meat dishes, the addition of cinnamon gives it a distinctive regional accent.

<i>extra virgin olive oil</i>	<i>a glass of red wine</i>
<i>4 duck legs</i>	<i>1¼ cups passata (tomato purée)</i>
<i>2 large onions, finely chopped</i>	<i>1 × 14-ounce can diced or chopped</i>
<i>1 large carrot, finely chopped</i>	<i>tomatoes</i>
<i>1 large celery stalk, finely chopped</i>	<i>1 bay leaf</i>
<i>1 clove of garlic, crushed</i>	<i>a small handful of picked thyme leaves</i>
<i>flaky sea salt</i>	<i>1 cup chicken stock (see page 304)</i>
<i>freshly ground black pepper</i>	<i>whole milk</i>
<i>1 tablespoon ground cinnamon</i>	<i>1 pound dried rigatoni</i>
<i>“00” flour</i>	<i>3½ ounces Parmesan, grated</i>

Take a large, lidded ovenproof saucepan. Heat a good glug of olive oil over a medium heat and fry the duck legs, turning frequently, until brown on all sides, about 10 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add another glug of olive oil to the pan and preheat the oven to 300°F/150°C. Sauté the onions, carrot, and celery for around 10 minutes, until soft and glossy. Add the garlic and stir for a further minute. Return the duck legs to the pan, add a good pinch or two of salt, a few twists of black pepper, the cinnamon, and a handful of flour and stir. Pour in the wine, allow to bubble for a few minutes, then add the passata, the tomatoes, the bay leaf, and the thyme. Pour in the stock and turn the heat up a little. When the liquid boils, turn off the heat, cover the pan with the lid, and place in the oven. Leave for 2 hours, stirring just once, halfway through.

Remove the pan from the oven, locate the duck legs, and carefully lift them out. Discard the fat and bones, shred the meat with a knife and fork, and put the flesh back into the pan. Add a splash of milk and put on a low to medium heat to simmer gently.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the rigatoni according to the package instructions. When done, reserve a cup of the cooking water and drain the pasta. Add the pasta to the duck sauce, stir to coat completely, loosening with a little of the reserved pasta water if it seems too dry. Finally, stir in the Parmesan and serve.