



SEASONS AT HIGHCLERE



GARDENING, GROWING, AND COOKING THROUGH THE YEAR
AT THE REAL DOWNTON ABBEY

THE COUNTESS OF CARNARVON

RIZZOLI
BY YORK



Confit of Wild Duck

Wild duck is a dense, rich meat and marries well honey, berries and the warm spices.

INGREDIENTS

6 duck legs
1 cinnamon stick
3 star anise
2cm (¾ inch) knob ginger,
peeled and chopped
8 juniper berries
6 black peppercorns
1 shallot, chopped
3 garlic cloves, bruised
2 bay leaves
Duck fat, to cover
4 tbsp coarse salt
(approx. 15g/½oz salt
per kilo of duck leg)

PREPARATION TIME 20 mins **COOKING TIME** 3 hours **SERVES** 6

To make the confit duck ...

Place the duck legs into a deep tray and season with salt and pepper, add the cinnamon, star anise, ginger, juniper, peppercorns, shallot, garlic and bay leaves to the dish.

Preheat the oven to 140°C/275°F/Gas mark 1.

Cover the duck legs with duck fat, wrap in baking paper and tin foil and cook for 2½–3 hours or until the duck is very tender and you can remove the thin bone by simply twisting. (Be very careful when removing the duck legs from the hot fat.)

When cooked, carefully remove the duck legs from the fat, reserving the fat, and place on a roasting tray, draining off any excess fat. Leave to cool.

The confit legs can be kept for up to four days in the fridge if fully submerged in oil or the fat released in cooking.

To finish the dish ...

Heat some of the duck fat in a frying pan. Add the confit legs, skin-side down, and fry for 2–3 minutes, or until the skin is crisp and the duck meat is warmed through.

Plate up with the duck leg with autumn vegetables, cooked as you prefer. We used turned carrots, squash and turnips.

CHEF'S TIP

Confit duck legs can be made well in advance and kept for various uses.

If you're going to do this, as soon as they are cooked, put them in a sterilised jar or airtight plastic container. Cover them with all the hot fat. Leave to cool before sealing the jar or container.

In theory they will keep for several months in a jar, or several weeks in a plastic container, stored in the fridge ... however, they are so delicious and such a handy thing to have for a quick but luxurious lunch or supper, that they are unlikely to hang around that long!