

Roast Duck

I prefer to roast duck slowly at first to make the fat run out, then crisp it under a higher temperature towards the end. Well, actually I prefer to cook it via indirect heat in a Weber grill but this'll do indoors.

Planning

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| serves: | 4 |
| prep time: | 15 mins |
| cooking time: | 2½ hrs |

Ingredients

1 duck
1 set duck giblets (neck, heart, gizzard)
olive oil (just a splash)
1 stick/rib celery, roughly chopped
1 small-medium onion, roughly chooped
1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
~10 black peppercorns
2 tsp flour
Salt & pepper

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 170°C/325°F/gas 3.

Begin by getting the brown stock going for the gravy (or jus, if you prefer). Chop up the duck neck, halve the heart and pieces of gizzard. (Do NOT, repeat NOT, use the liver - it will make the stock bitter. Save this delicacy to serve on toast.) If the duck came with wing tips, remove them, halve them and add them to the giblets. Heat a heavy based pan on the hob over medium heat and, with very little olive oil, brown the duck pieces for ~10 minutes. (You should be getting some caramelized meat bits sticking to the bottom of the pan. This is good.) Toss in the chopped veggies, stir and continuing browning everything for about another 5-10 minutes. Cover with water. Stir with a wooden spatula scraping all the caramelized juices from the bottom of the pan. Add the bay leaf and black peppercorns, and bring to simmering point. Leave it to simmer, topping up as necessary with boiling water, while you cook the duck itself. (It can cook as long as you like but needs at least 2 hours.)

The Duck. Slash the duck skin in a criss-cross, diamond pattern. Take care to cut only the skin and fat, not the flesh underneath. The point here is to let the fat run out as it melts while cooking. Dry the duck skin with kitchen towel (moisture tends to stop it crisping) and season with salt & pepper. Put the duck, preferably on a low wire support, into a roasting pan and set in the middle of the oven. Leave it for 90 minutes. Increase the oven temperature to 220°C/425°F/gas 7. Continue roasting for another 30 minutes by which time, hopefully, the duck skin will have crisped up.

The gravy/jus. Strain the brown duck stock. Remove the duck from the roasting pan and cover loosely with foil to keep warm. Strain most of the fat from the roasting pan, set it back on a moderate heat and stir the flour into the remaining fat. Cook the flour out for a minute or two then stir in your duck stock (just about 8-10 fl oz of it if you have more). Continuing to stir, scraping any brown gooey bits from the pan, bring this to the simmer and cook for a couple of minutes. While it's simmering, carve the duck.