

Duck Confit

This is my generation II of a duck confit recipe, this being based on one from the master, Raymond Blanc. Some duck confit recipes seem to end up too salty; this one did not and tasted terrific. It makes a fine meal in its own right (simply reheat the duck legs skin side down in the oven) but it is also the starting point for a classic French *Cassoulet*.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	24 hrs
cooking time:	2½ hrs

Ingredients

2 fresh bay leaves, finely sliced
4 sprigss fresh thyme, finely chopped
1 tablespoons rock salt
4 garlic cloves, finely sliced
4 duck legs
750g duck fat or lard

Method

Mix together the bay, thyme, salt and garlic - the marinade mix. Lay the duck legs on a baking tray, flesh-side upwards, and distribute the marinade mix evenly over. Cover with cling film and leave to marinate in the fridge overnight. The next day, rinse the marinade off the duck legs and pat them dry with a cloth.

Preheat the oven to 140°C/275°F/Gas 1. On the stove top, gently melt the fat in a pan in which the duck pieces just fit comfortably. When hot, add the duck, which must be covered with fat; if it is not, add lard until it is fully covered. If you have a thermometer, bring it to 85°C; *sans* thermometer, this is when it is just trembling but not boiling. Transfer it uncovered into the oven and cook it for 2¼ hours.

If you do not plan to use the confit within a day or two, transfer the confit to a plastic container or sterilized preserving jar. Ladle the fat over the confit through a fine sieve, being careful not to ladel any of the juices from the bottom of the cooking dish. Allow to cool completely then seal with a lid and refrigerate for a good couple of weeks (to allow the flavour to develop) until needed. You will then be set to make a wonderful *Cassoulet*.

Alternatively, you could use the Duck Confit in its own right. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6. To serve, remove the duck from the fat and place on a baking tray for 1 hour to come to room temperature. Pour off any melted fat from the tray and roast, skin-side down, for 20 minutes, turning it skin-side up to serve. It goes well with braised red cabbage or with a pulse such as flageolet, haricot or cannellini beans.

[You can melt the stored fat from the container and bring to the boil before straining back through a sieve into a bowl to keep in the fridge to use for another confit. It can be used 3 times before it becomes too salty.]