

"Desolation Duck & Dip" (Grilled Duck With Sauces)

Have you ever grilled a duck? It's a great way to prepare them. Grilled ducks are best cooked with garlic and ginger slivers placed inside the flesh or beneath the skin. Discard the fat just inside the body cavity of the bird and with the duck placed upon its breast, use the tip of a sharp knife to slit the fatty part of the duck beneath each wing. Insert a garlic clove and a sliver of ginger on both sides. Use the tip of the knife to prick the skin all over the bird, carefully avoiding piercing the meat.

Now, place the duck, breast side up, upon the grill, rubbing the duck with salt and pepper. Magic is accomplished inside your covered gas grill, using indirect heat with the two middle burners turned off. Fruitwoods are placed in the smoker box and go particularly well with duck. Try apple or cherry. Be sure to use a drip pan to avoid flare-ups. Fire up the outside burners to medium only, then pull the cover down and cook the quacker until the skin is mahogany brown (about 1-1/2 hours). Drain the juices and fat and check the meat with a baby dial thermometer. Continue cooking the duck until it is perfectly done in about another hour or when your thermometer reads 165 degrees F. The carry over effect will finish the bird at about 172 degrees.

It is very important to NOT exceed this temperature. I'd even go so far as to say your success or failure depends upon this critical finishing temperature. Allow the duck to rest five minutes before serving it with plenty of sweet and sour cherry-cinnamon sauce we call "Desolation Duck Dip".

"Desolation Duck Dip"

(Hot Cherry Sauce For Ducks)

- 15 oz. fresh or canned cherries
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 1-1/2 tspns. cornstarch
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup port wine
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1-cup chicken stock
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 2 tspns. honey

Inside a deep saucepan, cook the sugar, honey, vinegar, lemon juice, and the chicken stock together for a couple of minutes over medium heat. Mix the cornstarch with the cold water in a separate container then stir it into the mixture, raising the heat to thicken it. Add the remaining ingredients and continue cooking the sauce over medium heat until it is thick and bubbly. Turn the heat off, remove, and discard the cinnamon stick after five minutes.

"Colorado Cranberry Duck Drench"

(Hot Cranberry Sauce For Ducks)

You can't beat this recipe with a stick! If you like cranberries, you'll love this sauce. Remove the duck and fat from the skillet or Dutch oven. Add the port and heat it to deglaze the utensil, scraping up any browned bits of fond. Add the butter, melt it slowly, stir in the flour, and make a roux. Next, pour in the chicken or duck broth and whisk the mixture until it is smooth and thickened. Stir in the orange juice and brown sugar then add the cranberries and cook the mixture over high heat until the cranberries pop open in 2 or 3 minutes. Add the cayenne then salt and pepper to taste. If the mixture is too tart, add more brown sugar.

To serve the duck, cut it in half lengthwise and pour the sauce over each serving. Here are the ingredients you'll need:

- 1/4 cup port wine
- 2 tbsps. butter
- 2 tbsps. flour
- 1 cup chicken or duck broth
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 3 tbsps. brown sugar
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- dash of cayenne pepper
- juice of 1/2 lemon
- salt and pepper

"Whiskey Springs Orange"

(Outlaw's Hot Orange Duck Sauce)

- 2 tspns. grated orange peel
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1-1/2 tbsps. orange schnapps
- 2 tbsps. currant jelly
- 1 tbspn. lemon juice
- dash of dry mustard
- 1-1/2 tspns. cornstarch mixed in 2 tbsps. cold water

* Combine all the ingredients and heat the mixture slowly until it boils, bubbles, and thickens, stirring constantly. Serve it hot over smoked duck.

And for goodness sake! Don't throw away your duck bones. Make some duck soup. Here's how.

"Green River Riverwater" (Duck Stock)

- 2 (5-pound) dressed ducks
- 3 celery ribs (quartered)
- 2 onions (quartered)
- 1 green bell pepper (quartered)
- 64 oz. chicken broth
- 2 quarts water
- 2 bay leaves
- 5 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 tspn. black peppercorns

Place the ducks on a rack in a large Dutch oven and bake them at 350° until a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest portion registers 170° (about 2 hours). Cool the ducks completely then remove the meat from the bones (to be used for another dish). Combine the duck bones and the remaining ingredients in the Dutch oven and bring the liquid to boil. Immediately reduce the heat and barely simmer the liquid uncovered, for an hour. Skim the fat and foam from the top of the stock following the first 10 minutes of simmering, and then pour the stock through a wire-mesh strainer into a large bowl, discarding the solids.

Best Wishes,
Chuckwagon