

Smoked Duck Breast in a Chestnut Praline Syrup

Yield: 4 serves | **Rating:** 5/5 | **Prep:** 30 min | **Cook:** 25 min | **Source:** thestranger.online

A rich duck and earthy flavour make this the perfect plate of comfort for those Spring and Autumn days where the weather is on such a fine line, as the chestnut provides a hearty but still light glaze.

Ingredients

Duck:

- ¼ cup salt (rock)
- 2 tbsp sugar (light brown)
- 1 tsp thyme (fresh)
- 1 tsp rosemary (fresh)
- 1 Pepper (black)
- 4 duck breast (boneless, skin on)

Praline Syrup:

- 1 cup pecans (chopped)
- 1 cup chestnuts (peeled, lightly chopped)
- 2 cups dark corn syrup
- ½ cup sugar (dark brown)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tsp vanilla

Notes

Dark Corn Syrup is freely available in the UK, here's one option:

<https://www.partridges.co.uk/dark-corn-syrup.html>



Instructions

1. Soak 2 cups of applewood or cherrywood chips in water for 30 to 45 minutes. In a small bowl, combine the salt, the sugar, the thyme, rosemary and 1 tsp pepper. Sprinkle the mixture over both sides of the duck breast and rub in gently. Place a rack on a baking tray, put the duck breasts on the rack, cover with cling film and place in the fridge overnight.
2. Lightly chop the pecans and chestnuts until they are smaller in size but not too fine. In a saucepan, add the dark corn syrup, dark brown sugar, and water. Raise the heat to medium and bring to a boil for 1 minute. Stir in the nuts and allow the mixture to bubble for a further 1 minute. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla. The syrup will thicken as it cools, so ensure you bring it back up to serving temperature when required.
3. This, or any extra syrup can be stored in mason jars with lids. You can strain the nuts from the syrup or leave them whole. As they sit in the syrup, they will infuse more and more of their flavour. This syrup can be kept in the fridge for up to 3 weeks.
4. At least 30 minutes prior to grilling, remove the duck breast halves from the fridge and pat dry with kitchen roll.
5. Prepare a charcoal or gas bbq for smoking over high heat; the temperature inside the grill should be 200 to 220C. If using charcoal, bank the lit coals on either side of the grill bed to form a valley, leaving a strip in the center without heat. Place a drip pan in the center strip and fill the pan with water. Add the 2 cups wood chips to the fire just before grilling.
6. If using gas, fill the smoker box with up to 2 cups wood chips, then preheat the grill. Turn off 1 or more of the burners to create a cooler zone and hence use an alternative indirect process. Brush and oil the grill grate prior to starting.
7. Place the duck skin side down, on the grill over the indirect heat area. Cover the grill and cook the duck for approximately 20 minutes. Move the breasts over the coals and cook for approximately 5 minutes to crisp the skin. The breasts should be medium rare at this point.
8. Transfer the duck to a platter and serve hot or at room temperature with the warmed syrup over the top.