



Duck with Spinach and Duck Confit Purse

Main Course, Serves 8

3 medium onions
75 g./5 tbsp. unsalted butter
1/2 head cabbage, sliced
60 ml./1/4 cup sherry
1 litre/4 cups chicken stock
Salt to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste
225 g./8 oz. duck confit
455 g./1 lb. large, whole spinach leaves
1 medium butternut squash,
peeled and diced
2 whole star anise
4 half duck breasts
60 ml./1/4 cup orange cognac
Fresh herbs for garnish

- To prepare the spinach purse: Slice 2 of the onions. Heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat and melt 45 grams/3 tablespoons butter. Add the sliced onions and cabbage and cook, stirring, until the vegetables begin to caramelize. Add the sherry and 1/2 litre/2 cups of the stock and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently until the vegetables are very tender, about 25 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and let cool.
- While the cabbage mixture is cooling, shred the duck confit into a bowl. When the vegetable mixture is cool enough, combine with the shredded confit. Arrange some small rings or ramekins on the counter, and line with plastic wrap. Line with spinach leaves, and fill with confit mixture. Fold the leaves over using the plastic wrap to make a “purse.”
- To make the sauce: Slice the remaining onion. In a large saucepan, combine the sliced onion, butternut squash, star anise and the remaining 1/2 litre/2 cups stock. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer until the squash is tender and the sauce is reduced by half. Strain the sauce, discarding the solids, and swirl in the remaining 30 grams/2 tablespoons butter. Season to taste with salt.
- Prepare the duck by making a few slits with a knife through the skin and fat and season with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and sear the breasts, turning once, until they are cooked to the desired doneness. Add the orange cognac and bring to a simmer, scraping up any brown bits that have stuck to the bottom of the pan. Set aside.

To Serve:

- Put a spoonful of the squash sauce on a heated plate. Place the spinach purse in the middle and arrange a few slices of the duck, and some of the orange cognac sauce on the spinach purse. Top with fresh herbs.

Squash Risotto with White Truffle Oil and Black Truffles

Appetiser, Serves 8

8 small acorn squash
240 g./2 cups of 1/2-in. cubes peeled
winter squash or pumpkin
1 bay leaf
55 g./4 tbsp. salted butter
1/2 onion, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
120 ml./1/2 cup white wine
400 g./2 cups carnaroli rice
2 litres/8 cups full-flavored
chicken stock, heated
100 g./1 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
Salt to taste
White truffle oil
Fresh black truffles, sliced paper thin

- Preheat the oven to 150 degrees C/300 degrees F.
- Prepare the acorn squash: Using a paring knife, cut a circle about 6 1/3 centimetres/ 2 1/2 inches in diameter around the stem. Lift out the circle of squash with the stem attached. Scoop out the seeds with a spoon, along with any stringy strands of flesh. Try not to cut into the walls of the squash. Repeat with the remaining squash.
- Place the squash on a baking sheet and roast until tender but not mushy, 17 to 20 minutes; remove from the oven and let cool. (If you are using the squash right away, time it with the finishing of the risotto so they are both hot. Do not let the risotto sit for a long time cooling or you will have cement.)
- Bring a medium saucepan two-thirds full of salted water to a boil. Add the diced squash and bay leaf, and cook just until the squash begins to become tender, about 5 minutes. Drain, discard the bay leaf, and set the squash aside.
- Using a risotto pan or small stockpot, heat half the butter and the onion over medium heat. Cook, stirring, until onion is translucent; add the garlic. When the onion and garlic begin to brown, deglaze with the white wine and simmer for a minute. Add the rice. Using a wooden spoon, gently stir the rice until all the grains are coated. At this point begin adding the hot stock about 475 millilitres/2 cups at a time. Simmer, stirring the risotto constantly to make it very creamy, until almost all the liquid has been absorbed before adding more.
- When the risotto is half cooked and has absorbed about 1 litre/4 cups liquid, add the diced squash. Continue to add more broth, stirring gently, until the risotto is cooked to your taste—creamy and softened, but still with a bit of crunch. Stir in the remaining 30 grams/2 tablespoons butter and the cheese. Season to taste with salt and stir in about 2 1/2 millilitres/1/2 teaspoon of truffle oil.

To Serve:

- Place a hot baked squash in the center of each serving plate. Fill each with risotto and let it spill out a little. Garnish with some sliced truffles and shavings of Parmigiano-Reggiano.




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InterContinental The Barclay
New York
111 East 48th Street
New York, NY 10017 USA
p. 212.755.5900
f. 212.644.0079