



Menu du Jour

01 Feb 02

Seared Duck Breasts with Cajun Mustard Sauce
Cornbread Apple Dressing
Sautéed Pepper & Green Bean Medley
(Serves two)

Seared Duck Breasts with Cajun Mustard Sauce

The most widely sold domestic duck is the white Pekin, which was brought to the United States from China in the 19th century. Young white Pekin ducks are often sold as Long Island ducklings. Fed on a diet of corn and soy, the Pekin is milder in flavor than other varieties.

Although very tasty, duck can be fatty unless the skin is browned and rendered of most of its fat. Scoring the skin and searing in a hot skillet help to remove the subcutaneous fat.

2 duck breasts halves, about 6 ounces each
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. With a sharp knife, cut the flesh side of the duck breasts in a 1/2-inch shallow crosshatch pattern being careful not to cut into the flesh. Season the breasts with salt and pepper.

Place a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat until the pan get very hot; sear the duck, fat-side down, for 6 to 8 minutes or until the skin is browned. Turn and cook for another 2 minutes. Pour off the grease and place the pan in the oven until the duck is medium-rare, about 6 to 8 minutes. Turn and cook, fat side down, for 1 minute. Remove from the oven.

Allow breasts to rest, tented with aluminum foil, for 5 minutes before slicing.



Apple Dressing

1 (8 1/2-ounce) box Jiffy corn muffin mix
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1/2 cup chopped yellow onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
2 cups peeled & chopped Granny Smith apples
1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of chicken soup
1 cup whole milk

Prepare cornbread as directed on package. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

In a medium skillet, cook the onion and celery in 1 tablespoon of butter until the onion is tender, about 5 minutes. Add the apples and cook another minute.

In a large bowl, mix together the apple mixture, poultry seasoning, pepper, remaining butter, soup, milk, and the crumbled cornbread.

Spoon dressing into a greased casserole dish, cover with aluminum foil, and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and continue baking another 15 minutes.

Cajun Mustard Sauce

1 cup duck stock (or 1/2 cup chicken stock & 1/2 cup beef stock)
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
1/4 cup blonde roux

Make a roux by melting 4 tablespoons of unsalted butter in a small saucepan. Gradually add 1/4 cup of all-purpose flour and cook, stirring constantly, until the roux begins to turn blonde and gives off a nutty aroma. Remove from heat and reserve.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, bring the stock to a boil. Add the mustard and Cajun seasoning, whisking to incorporate. With the sauce still boiling, stir in 1/2 tablespoon of roux at a time, stirring after each addition, until the sauce reaches the desired consistency.

Adjust seasoning as necessary. (Some freshly ground black pepper but no salt will probably be needed.) Add any juices from the resting meat to the stock.



Sautéed Pepper & Green Bean Medley

1/2 pound fresh green beans
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1 shallot, minced
1/2 large yellow bell pepper, sliced into 1/2-inch strips
1/2 large red bell pepper, sliced into 1/2-inch strips
1/4 cup chicken stock
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano

Wash and trim the green beans. Place the green beans in a medium saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Cook the green beans for 3 minutes, drain and shock under cold water.

Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and shallots and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add the bell pepper and toss to combine. Add the chicken stock and cook, covered, until the peppers are tender, about 4 minutes. Add the green beans and the butter and heat until beans are warmed. Season with salt and pepper; add the oregano.



Cooking & Presentation



Duck Breasts Scored To Render The Fat

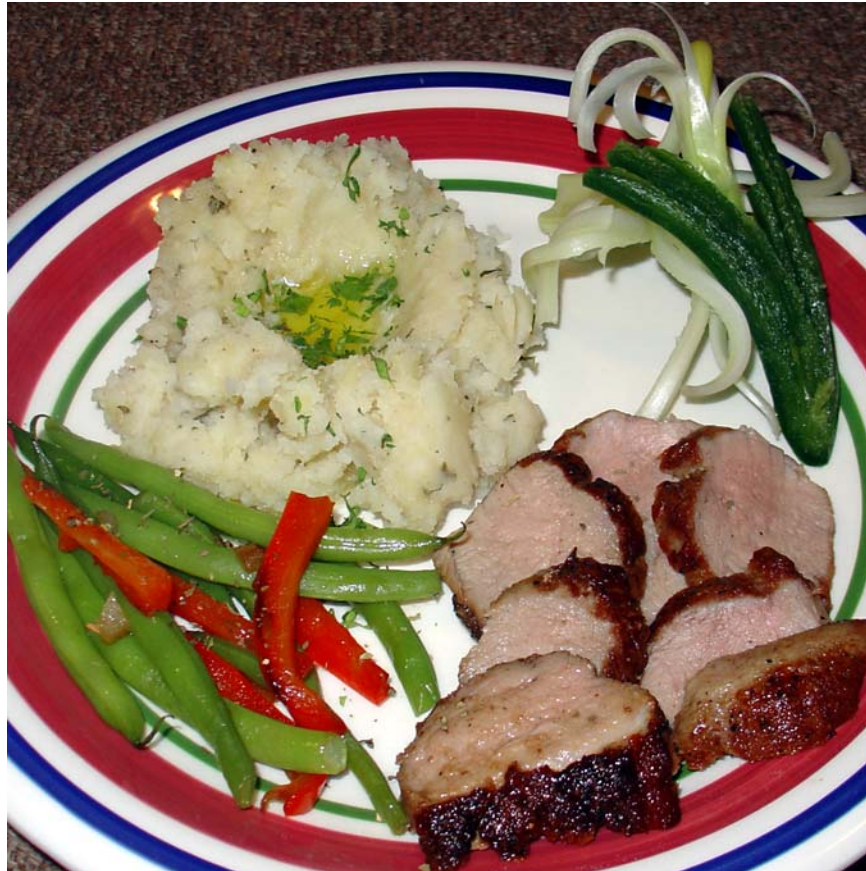


Seared Duck Breasts



One Presentation:

Cut the duck breast on the bias into slices. Spoon a tight mound of stuffing in the center of a warmed serving plate. Shingle duck slices aside the dressing. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of the warmed mustard sauce over the duck. Arrange peppers and green beans on the plate. Garnish with fresh thyme and scallion, celery, and jalapeño brushes; serve immediately.



An Alternative Presentation:

Cut the duck breast on the bias into slices. Spoon a mound of garlic-mashed potatoes on a warmed serving plate, dot with butter and garnish with fresh chopped flat leaf parsley. Shingle duck slices onto the plate. Arrange peppers and green beans on the plate. Garnish with fresh thyme and scallion, celery, and jalapeño brushes; serve immediately.