

Roast Duck Breast with Pardina Lentils and Mustard Fruits

As we start to head into the autumn months the game season is around the corner. This dish is fantastic with duck but you could use any game bird. Here we are using Barbary duck breast, they are not as fatty as most ducks and have a subtle gamey flavour.

Pardina lentils are small, brown Spanish lentils. They have a slightly nutty flavour and hold their shape well while cooking. Do try and source these lentils otherwise Puy lentils will work well as a substitute.

The mustard fruits or "Mostarda di Frutta" are mixed dried fruits with sugar and mustard essence from Northern Italy. Any good Italian deli or food store should have this. It is great served with boiled and roasted meats.

serves 4 as a Tapa

- 2 Barbary duck breast
- 1 cup Pardina lentils
- 1 onion finely diced
- 1 carrot finely diced
- 1 celery stick finely diced
- 1 clove garlic finely chopped
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 50g pancetta finely diced
- 2 tbl spoons Mustard Fruits finely chopped

Start by sweating off all the vegetables, pancetta and garlic with a little olive oil in a heavy based pot for 5 minutes. Add the lentils, thyme and bay leaf, and just cover with water. Simmer on a low heat for 12-15 minutes. The lentils should be firm and hold their shape well, but still be cooked through. When the lentils are cooked strain off any excess water and put aside.

Meanwhile score the skin of the duck breast with a sharp knife and be careful not to cut into the flesh, just go as deep as the fat. Season the breast well and put into a medium hot pan skin side down. Leave in the pan for about 5 minutes, this helps melt some of that fat away from under the skin so you're not left with a thick layer of fat on the meat. As you are doing this drain the melted fat out of the pan. After 5 minutes the skin should be nice and caramelized and most of the fat rendered off. Then put the duck into a moderated oven for 4-5 minutes. The duck doesn't need long to cook and should be served medium rare. After 5 minutes take it out of the oven and let it rest for another 5 minutes. If you like yours a little more cooked leave it in the oven a couple of minutes longer.

While the duck is resting re-heat the lentils with little olive oil, so they're not dry, and season. Divide the lentils onto the plates and slice the duck into thin slices and place on top of the lentils. Spoon the mustard fruits on top or serve on the side.