POUR STORY SOCIETY · NEVER HAD A DOG

Partridge roasted with bacon and thyme

Serves 2 · Active 10 min · Total 40 min, including resting

YOU NEED

- 2 partridge, cleaned
- 4 slices thick-cut bacon
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 small apple, quartered
- Salt and black pepper

Pour: Bourgogne Rouge, or a Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

Ask for a Bourgogne Rouge, the everyday red from Burgundy.

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1. Heat the oven to 425°F. Pat the birds dry and season them inside and out with salt and pepper.
2. Tuck an apple quarter and a thyme sprig into each cavity, rub the butter over the birds, and lay two slices of bacon across each breast. Skinned birds need the bacon even more than plucked ones.
3. Roast in a small pan for 20 to 25 minutes, until the thickest part of the breast reads 155°F. Partridge is lean and dries out fast, so start checking early.
4. Rest the birds 10 minutes, long enough for the breast to coast up to about 160°F, and spoon the pan drippings over them.

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Pheasant braised in cider and cream

Serves 3 to 4 · Active 25 min · Total about 1 hr 30 min

YOU NEED

- 1 pheasant, cut into 2 breasts and 2 legs
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 tart apples, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 cup fresh apple cider
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- Salt and black pepper

Pour: Mâcon-Villages or Mâcon-Lugny

Ask for a Mâcon-Villages. It's white Burgundy at a weeknight price.

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1. Season the pheasant with salt and pepper and brown it in the butter and oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, 4 to 5 minutes a side. Set it aside.
2. Cook the onion and apples in the same pot for about 5 minutes, until they start to soften.
3. Pour in the cider and broth, scrape up the browned bits, and add the thyme. Put the legs back in, cover, and keep it at a gentle simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Add the breasts, cover again, and simmer 15 to 20 minutes more, until the breast reads 160°F.
5. Lift out the pheasant, stir the cream into the pot, and simmer 3 or 4 minutes until the sauce thickens. Season it and spoon it over the bird.

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Duck breast with Zinfandel cherry sauce

Serves 2 · Active 25 min · Total 35 min

YOU NEED

- 2 duck breasts, skin on
- 1 shallot, minced
- ½ cup Zinfandel
- ½ cup pitted cherries, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cold butter
- Salt and black pepper

Pour: Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel, or an Oregon Pinot Noir

Ask for a Dry Creek Zinfandel, and buy two if one is going in the pan.

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1. Score the skin in a crosshatch without cutting into the meat, and season both sides.
2. Lay the breasts skin side down in a cold skillet and set it over medium heat. Let the fat render 8 to 10 minutes, until the skin is deep brown and crisp. Wild mallard carries much less fat and needs only 5 or 6 minutes.
3. Turn the breasts and cook 2 to 4 minutes more, to 135°F for medium-rare. Rest them on a board for 5 minutes.
4. Pour off all but a tablespoon of fat. Cook the shallot for a minute, then add the wine, cherries and broth and boil until it's reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and swirl in the cold butter until the sauce turns glossy.
5. Slice the duck across the grain and spoon the sauce over it.

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Goose breast with wild blueberry sauce

Serves 4 · Active 20 min · Total 40 min, including resting

YOU NEED

- 2 goose breasts, skin removed and silver skin trimmed
- Salt and plenty of black pepper
- 2 tablespoons bacon fat or vegetable oil
- 1 shallot, minced
- ½ cup dry red wine
- 1 cup wild Maine blueberries, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup beef broth
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon cold butter

Pour: Rioja Reserva

Look for the word Reserva on the label. It means at least three years of aging, one in barrel.

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1. Take the breasts out of the refrigerator half an hour before cooking. Pat them dry and season them hard with salt and pepper.
2. Heat the fat in a cast iron skillet until it shimmers. Sear the breasts 3 to 4 minutes a side, until the thickest part reads 130°F for medium-rare. Goose cooked past medium turns tough and livery.
3. Rest the breasts on a board for 10 minutes.
4. Cook the shallot in the same pan for a minute, then add the wine, blueberries, broth and maple syrup. Boil until it thickens, about 5 minutes, then take it off the heat and swirl in the cold butter until the sauce turns glossy.
5. Slice the goose thin across the grain and spoon the sauce over it.