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The Name of the Game

Autumn is one of the most exciting times in the culinary year as it heralds the start of the wild game season. With so much wild game now readily available it is a great time for cooks and food lovers.

The wonderful flavour of wild game really gets the taste buds going - and game lovers are spoilt for choice. Whether it is pheasant, venison, partridge, grouse, pigeon, rabbit or duck, there are convenient cuts in all meats and the good news is the choice is increasing.

Cooking game does not just mean reaching for the roasting tin. The ready-to-use cuts now available in many butchers and supermarkets make it an ideal choice at all times of the year. For instance have you thought of barbecuing venison?

The new Game-to-Eat recipe booklet includes some great ideas for barbecuing venison and partridge. As game meat is so lean it is really easy to prepare and cook. The natural flavours of the meat combined with the charcoal flavour of the bbq will guarantee these recipes are a winner.

And for anyone on a diet, game could be the answer. Lean and low in fat, the wonderful flavour of wild game means you can have all the taste but none of the fat or cholesterol associated with many red meats.

So check out these recipes from Game-to-Eat and stay ahead of the game!



Game Paté

Serves 10

240g (8½oz) streaky bacon

350g (12oz) pheasant minced or blitzed in a food processor

675g (1½lb) fatty pork, eg belly, minced

1 pheasant breast, diced

2 tbsps brandy

8 tbsps wine

1 clove garlic, crushed

Salt & pepper

6-8 juniper berries, chopped

2 tbsps fresh rosemary, chopped

2 tbsps fresh thyme, chopped

Small bunch fresh coriander, chopped

Bay leaves for decoration

- Chop half the bacon into small squares, reserving the other half, and mix together with the other ingredients.
- Allow to stand for an hour for the flavours to develop if time allows.
- Put into a terrine or large oven-proof baking dish, smooth the top and arrange the remaining bacon slices diagonally across. Decorate with the bay leaves. Place, uncovered, in a baking tin of hot water to come half way up the sides and cook in a slow oven (150C, 300F, Gas Mark 2) for 2 to 2½ hours.
- The paté is cooked when it starts to come away from the side of the dish and the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted into the middle.
- Remove from the oven and weight down (use a similar sized dish with kitchen scale weights or even a brick covered with tinfoil).
- Allow to cool, then refrigerate overnight before cutting into slices to serve.





Barbecued Venison Steaks

Serves 4

4 venison steaks

For the marinade:

150ml (½ pint) red wine

2 tbsps French wholegrain mustard

1 tbsp soft brown sugar

2 tbsps tomato purée

1 tsp chilli powder (or to taste)

1 small onion, sliced

2 cloves garlic, crushed

Salt & freshly ground black pepper

- If the steaks are thickly cut, put each steak between two sheets of cling film and flatten with a rolling pin to about ½" thick.
- Place all the marinade ingredients in a blender and blitz until smooth.
- Put the steaks in a dish and pour over the marinade. Cover with cling film, put in the fridge and leave to marinate for about 2 hours, turning occasionally.
- Drain the meat from the marinade, season on each side and place on a hot barbecue. Cook on each side turning regularly to ensure even cooking. Baste occasionally with the remaining marinade to keep moist.
- Serve with barbecued peppers and a mayonnaise mixed with chilli and tarragon.



Pheasant Casserole

Serves 4

2 pheasants

110g (4oz) unsmoked bacon, cut into 3 or 4 pieces

25g (1oz) butter or oil

225g (8oz) shallots

25g (1oz) flour

570ml (1 pint) good stock or chicken stock cube

2 tpsps redcurrant jelly

100ml (4fl oz) white wine

Bouquet garni

8 whole field mushrooms

Salt & pepper

Chopped parsley

- Melt butter or oil in a large pan and brown the pheasants all over. Remove. Sauté the shallots and bacon. Remove from the pan. Add enough flour to the pan to take up the remaining juices. Mix well.
 - Add the stock, season and bring to the boil to thicken.
 - Return the pheasant to the pan. Add the shallots and bacon and cover. Cook in the oven at 160C/375F/Gas 5 for approx 1 hour or until the juices run clear. Add the mushrooms about 10 minutes before the end of cooking.
 - Serve with fresh vegetables and crème fraîche mixed with horseradish.
- Nb. Instead of using whole pheasant, allow 1 pheasant breast per person.





Grilled Partridge

Serves 4
4 partridge
2 tbsps cumin seeds
Grated zest 1 lemon
75g (3oz) butter, softened
Salt & freshly ground black pepper

- Cut the partridges in half lengthways with a sharp serrated knife and hit the pieces so the legs lie flat.
- Toast the cumin seeds in a dry pan for a few seconds until they release their aroma. Transfer to a pestle and mortar and grind coarsely, then mix into the butter with the lemon zest.
- Rub the partridge all over with the butter and season with salt and pepper. Cook under a hot grill being careful not to let them burn, and turn them several times, brushing with more butter. Cook for about 10-15 minutes, until golden brown and the skin is crisp. Serve with whole baby carrots.



Pan fried Partridge Breasts

Serves 4
8 partridge breasts, skinned
2 tbsps olive oil

Dressing:
1 red onion, finely chopped
1 bunch watercress, finely chopped
1 tbsp chives, chopped
1 tbsp toasted pine kernels
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
6 - 8 tbsps olive oil

- Mix together all the ingredients for the dressing.
- Fry the breasts in the hot oil until the meat has browned all over (4-5 minutes). Cut the breasts into slices and serve with the dressing poured over. Serve with potato cakes.

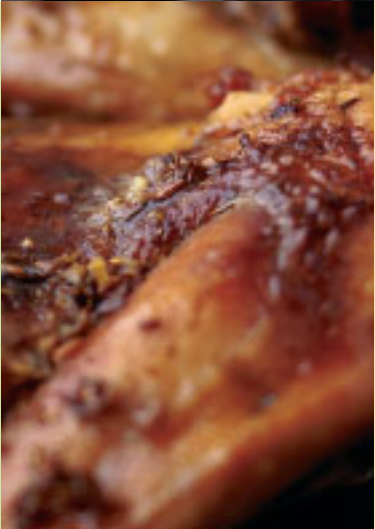


Minute Venison Steaks

Serves 4
4 venison steaks
Knob of butter
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsps port
225g (8oz) redcurrant jelly
100g (4oz) Brie de Meaux
Salt & freshly ground pepper.

- Make the sauce by simmering the port and redcurrant jelly together for about 5 minutes. Sieve and keep warm.
- If the steaks are thick, place each steak between sheets of cling film and flatten to about ½" thick with a rolling pin.
- Put a knob of butter and the olive oil in heavy frying pan. Heat until the butter has melted. Season the steaks, place in the pan and cook quickly on each side.
- Cook according to taste. Serve each steak topped with a slice of brie and a little sauce. Serve with salad.





This recipe booklet has been produced by the Countryside Alliance and the National Game Dealers Association with the support of the England Rural Development Programme.

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