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DELICIOUS DISHES USING BRITISH GAME

Introduction

I am delighted to have been asked to create the recipes for the 7th Game-to-Eat booklet and I hope you enjoy trying them out in your own kitchen. As someone who has been cooking game for years, not only as a professional chef but also for my own enjoyment, I have devised a range of dishes that I hope will encourage and excite you to experiment with a variety of ingredients and get the most out of cooking game.

With so many convenient cuts now available from your local supermarkets and butchers, there is no excuse not to include game as part of your regular weekly menu. It makes an excellent choice if you want to impress your guests with something a bit special and it's really healthy. My favourite dish is the Pan Seared Pheasant with Bacon and Figs. For a lighter option, why not try my tasty Spiced Plum and Venison Salad. Or if you're after a family favourite to warm up those winter evenings, the Game Pie is perfect.

As you can see game is a versatile choice for any occasion. So why not give my Game-to-Eat recipes a try and see for yourself how delicious and easy to cook they are?



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From Field to Fork



One of the most important considerations when buying meat is where it comes from. Most butchers and retailers highlight the provenance of the game on pack or in-store so you can enjoy game knowing which estate has produced it.

The Game-to-Eat campaign, now in its 8th year, is dedicated to increasing the enjoyment of British game. It is wild, natural and free range and if you're looking for something low in fat and cholesterol, game is a delicious and healthy alternative to many other red meats.

Results from research commissioned by the Game-to-Eat campaign*, suggest that there are real health benefits to eating game. Venison is high in protein, low in saturated fatty acids and contains higher levels of iron than any other red meat. Pheasant and partridge also contain a high level of iron, protein, vitamin B(6) and selenium, which helps to protect cells from damage caused by free radicals.

* Leatherhead Food International Research 2006

1. For the thyme butter, mix 100g of butter with 1 tbsp of fresh thyme leaves, 1 clove of crushed garlic and plenty of salt and pepper.
2. Rub the butter all over and under the skin of each partridge, place on an oven tray. Cook in the oven for 12-15 mins, basting regularly. Once cooked remove the partridge and allow to rest.
3. To make the purée, boil the parsnips with 1 tsp of thyme leaves and crushed garlic until tender. Strain and liquidise.

Add the cream, milk and seasoning to the parsnips and warm through. It should be a mash consistency.

4. For the mushrooms, heat 25g of butter in a frying pan on a high heat. Add the remaining crushed garlic and the thyme. Add mushrooms, a splash of white wine and season with pepper. Cook until they wilt. Serve the purée under the partridge and garnish with the mushrooms.

Roast Partridge with Thyme Butter, Wild Mushrooms and Parsnip Purée



Pre-heat the oven to 180°C

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 whole oven ready partridge
125g butter
6 sprigs thyme, leaves removed
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 clove whole garlic, peeled
200g mixed wild mushrooms
50ml white wine
4 parsnips, peeled and diced into 1 cm cubes
200ml double cream
200ml milk

GARNISH WITH THE ROASTED SPRIGS OF THYME

Roasted Partridge with Game Chips



Serves 4

Ingredients

4 partridge, oven ready
50g butter
4 sprigs thyme
4 bay leaves

Cabbage

1 Savoy cabbage
5 juniper berries, crushed slightly
100g cooked chestnuts
100g smoked bacon

Bread sauce

25g butter
1 small onion, finely diced
1 bay leaf
1 clove ground nutmeg
100g soft white breadcrumbs
200ml milk

Game chips

3 large potatoes
500ml vegetable oil, for frying

Redcurrant jelly to serve

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C

1. For the bread sauce, put 25g of butter, the onion, bay leaf and clove in a saucepan and cook slowly until the onion is soft. Add the breadcrumbs and milk. Slowly bring to simmer, season well with salt, pepper and a pinch of nutmeg. Cover the sauce with grease-proof paper, cook very slowly until thick.
2. Rub the partridge with butter and season. Place the thyme and bay leaf into each cavity of the birds. Put on a baking tray, cook for 18 mins in a pre-heated oven. Baste the partridge during cooking to prevent them drying out. Remove from the oven and leave to rest for 15 mins.
3. While the partridges are cooking, finely

slice the cabbage leaves. Chop the chestnuts and squash the juniper berries. In a frying pan heat the bacon until brown then add the juniper, butter and cabbage. Add a splash of water to steam, season and leave the cabbage to wilt. Finally add the chestnuts.

4. For the game chips, peel and thinly slice the potatoes. Half fill a pan with oil and heat. Fry the chips in batches and lay on to absorbent paper to drain excess fat. Cook until golden brown.
5. To serve, place a spoon full of the cabbage on the plate, and place the partridge on top, lay on a few game chips and a portion of bread sauce.

GARNISH WITH WATERCRESS AND REDCURRANT JELLY

1. Make a dry marinade by crushing 2 cloves, ½ cinnamon stick, 1 star anise, 3 peppercorns, 4 juniper berries and a teaspoon of salt with a pestle and mortar. Grind to a dust. Rub the venison with the mix and leave to marinade for at least an hour or overnight.
2. Pour the wine, sugar and spices into a pan and bring to the boil. Cut the plums in half, remove the stone and poach slowly for 20 mins.
3. Heat 2 tbsp of oil in a large non stick pan on a medium heat. Add venison and cook until slightly coloured, turn the meat and do the same again. Place on

an oven tray and cook for 8-10 mins for rare or 12-14 mins for medium. Remove from the oven and rest for 10 mins before slicing thinly.

4. In the venison pan, add the balsamic vinegar and 3 tbsp of the plum juices. Scrape the juices and turn off the heat once reduced. This is the salad dressing. Cool.
5. Mix the salad leaves together and pour over the dressing. Pile the salad onto plates, lay the venison on top. Arrange the walnuts and nestle the plums around the edge.

Spiced Plum and Venison Salad



Pre-heat the oven to 180 °C

Serves 4

Ingredients

550-600g venison loin

Venison rub

½ stick cinnamon
2 cloves
1 star anise
4 juniper berries
3 peppercorns

Poaching the plums

500ml red wine
100g sugar
6 plums, not too ripe
1 cinnamon stick
2 cloves
4 peppercorns
1 star anise
2 juniper berries

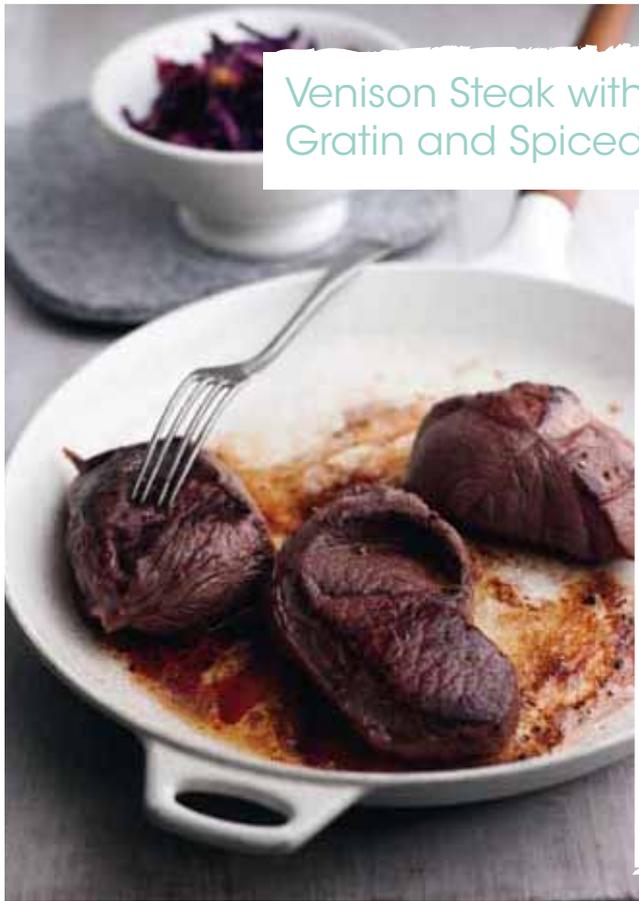
For cooking and dressing

2 tbsp oil
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

For the salad

75g walnut halves
Salad leaves

GARNISH WITH WALNUTS AND PLUMS



Venison Steak with Celeriac and Apple Gratin and Spiced Red Cabbage

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 x 200g venison steaks
1 tbs veg oil

Gratin

2 celeriac
4 green apples
75g butter
500ml double cream
2 sprigs thyme
2 cloves garlic, sliced

Red Cabbage

1 head red cabbage
500ml red wine
50g butter
200g brown sugar
100ml balsamic vinegar
1 cinnamon stick
75g raisins
2 apples, peeled and grated
1 star anise

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C

1. Peel and thinly slice the celeriac and apples. Boil the cream and butter together with the thyme and sliced garlic. Allow to thicken. Season well.
2. Using an ovenproof dish, ladle in a spoonful of reduced cream into the bottom of the dish. Place alternate layers of celeriac, seasoning, cream and apple until all the ingredients have been used. Top the last layer with small knobs of butter and cook for 1 hr 15 mins. Check it is cooked by piercing the gratin with a knife, it should slide in with ease.
3. While cooking the gratin, thinly slice the cabbage. Cook in a braising pan with a knob of butter and all the spices. Allow to wilt slightly before adding the balsamic vinegar, red wine, raisins, grated apple and sugar. Cover with greaseproof paper and cook for about 45 mins, stirring occasionally.
4. 10 mins before the gratin is ready, heat up a non-stick frying pan. Season the venison steaks on both sides. Add a tbs of oil to the frying pan and lay in the steaks. Allow to cook until they start to colour then turn them over and do the same on the other side. 30 secs each side should be sufficient if the pan is hot enough. Transfer onto a tray and finish in the oven for 6 mins.

6 mins rare
8 mins medium
10 mins well-done

SERVE WITH A SPOON OF THE GRATIN AND THE SPICED CABBAGE

1. Season the pheasants. Heat a large oven-proof casserole dish and add in the bacon and cook until golden, add the pheasants. Seal the birds on all sides until golden brown.
2. Pour in the vegetables, season and add the cider. Bring to the boil, put the lid on and place in the oven. Allow to cook for 30-40 mins. Once cooked remove the pheasants and allow to rest.
3. Place the casserole dish back on the heat, remove the lid and let the remaining juices reduce by half. Add in 50g butter and season.
4. Carve the pheasant, allowing one leg, and one breast per person. Serve with vegetables and the juices.

Pot Roasted Pheasant with Cider, Apples and Celeriac



Pre-heat the oven to 160°C

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 whole oven ready pheasants
 1 litre strong cider
 4 sprigs thyme
 2 bay leaves
 2 tbsp olive oil
 2 English apples (Coxes or Braeburn) peeled, cored and quartered
 ½ celeriac, diced into 1cm cubes
 1 leek, cut into rings, whites only
 2 sticks celery, cut into 2cm pieces
 1 onion, peeled and cut through the root into 8 wedges
 200g smoked bacon, diced
 50g butter

SERVE WITH A SELECTION OF VEGETABLES

Pan Seared Breast of Pheasant with Smoked Bacon Roasted Figs



Serves 4

Ingredients

4 pheasant breasts, wing bone left on
8 slices streaky smoked bacon
8 ripe figs
50g butter
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp redcurrant jelly
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tsp brown sugar
2 sprigs thyme
200ml red wine

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C

SERVE WITH A CORIANDER GARNISH AND THE BAKED FIGS

1. To prepare the figs, cut slits half way down the top of them. Wrap each fig with one slice of streaky bacon, use a cocktail stick to secure if needed. Press the bottom of the fig so it opens up, add a small knob of butter, thyme and a pinch of sugar, salt and pepper. Drizzle with olive oil to moisten. Place in a pre-heated oven for around 15 mins, until the bacon is crispy.
2. While the figs are cooking, heat a large non-stick frying pan and add 1 tbsp of oil. Season the pheasant breasts on the skin side and lay in the pan.
3. Cook for 3-4 mins until the skin is golden brown. Turn over and cook for 1 min. Transfer to a tray and cook in the oven for a further 4 mins.
4. While the pheasant finishes cooking, add the red wine to the same pan you just sealed the breasts in. Add the balsamic vinegar and redcurrant jelly then season to taste. Allow to reduce. Remove the pheasant from the oven and rest for 10 mins. Add a knob of butter to the sauce at the last minute and serve with the breast and bacon wrapped figs.

1. Heat a large pan and fry off the meat in batches until evenly coloured. Remove all the meat and fry the bacon and onions until slightly golden.
2. Add all the meat back into the pan, add the bay leaves, thyme, mushrooms and flour. Coat all the meat and allow to cook for a few minutes before adding the red wine, redcurrant jelly, Worcestershire sauce and chicken stock. Bring to the boil, turn down the heat and allow to cook for 1 hr 15 mins.
3. After cooking, season the mix and transfer to a pie dish of your choice about 25cm diameter is perfect but a deep rimmed plate will work just as well.
4. Cover the top of the dish with the pastry and trim off the excess pastry. Crimp the edges with a fork and brush the top with a beaten egg. Season with salt and bake in the oven for 30 mins at 180°C or until golden brown.

Mixed Game Pie



Pre-heat the oven to 180°C
25cm pie dish

Serves 6

For the filling

200g diced braising venison
350g diced mixed game
2 large onions, sliced
100g smoked bacon, diced
10 mushrooms, sliced
1 tbsp redcurrant jelly
1 tbsp flour
2 sprigs thyme
2 bay leaves
200ml red wine
2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
300ml chicken stock

For the pastry

1 packet rolled puff pastry
1 egg
1 tbsp vegetable oil

SERVE WITH SEASONAL VEGETABLES

The Game Season



Game can only be shot during specific times of the year and a basic guide to the shooting seasons is given below. However, increasingly, frozen game meat is available all year round.

Grouse:	12th August (Glorious Twelfth) to 10th December
Partridge:	1st September to 1st February
Pheasant:	1st October to 1st February
Duck and Goose:	1st September to 31st January
Hare:	1st August to 29th February
Red Deer Stags:	1st August to 30th April (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) 1st July to 20th October (Scotland)
Red Deer Hinds:	1st November to 31st March (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) 21st October to 15th February (Scotland)
Sika Deer Stags:	1st August to 30th April (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)
Sika Deer Hinds:	1st November to 31st March (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) 21st October to 15th February (Scotland)
Fallow Bucks:	1st August to 30th April
Fallow Does:	1st November to 31st March (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) 21st October to 15th February (Scotland)
Roe Bucks:	1st April to 31st October (England and Wales) 1st April to 20th October (Scotland)
Roe Does:	1st November to 31st March (England and Wales) 21st October to 31st March (Scotland)

Hints & tips

- **Delicious roast partridge** simply insert a piece of seasoned butter in the bird's cavity and cover the breast with butter to keep the delicate flavour. Cook in a very hot oven 220°C/425°F/Gas 7 for 30 mins, removing the fat for the last 10 mins to brown. Baste frequently but, if you don't have time for this, cook the birds on their breasts and turn upright to brown at the end. Serve with thin gravy, bread sauce and seasonal veg. Allow one roasted partridge per person. Serve the birds whole.
- **Quick and easy roast pheasant**, season the bird inside and out. Place a piece of apple, cored and skinned, or half a small onion inside the bird together with half the butter. Rub the outside of the bird with the remaining butter and cover the breast with butter. Cover with foil.

Roast at 190°C/375°F/Gas 5 for 45 mins basting from time to time. Remove the foil for the final 10 mins to brown the breast. Make a thin gravy with the roasting juices and serve on a warm dish.

One pheasant is enough for 2-3 people.
- **Roast your venison joint**, marinade the joint overnight in red wine and olive oil. Remove from the marinade and pat dry. Season with salt and pepper. Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas 7. Cover the joint with butter and cook for 15 mins per 450g.

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