



Chapter Three

CRISPY DUCK, RED ENDIVE, AND SPINACH



Gordon Ramsay Teaches Cooking II: Restaurant Recipes at Home

CRISPY DUCK, RED ENDIVE, AND SPINACH

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[Duck is] the one beautiful protein that everyone loves ordering off the menu but they get really nervous cooking it. I'm going to show you how to nail it.

Chapter Review

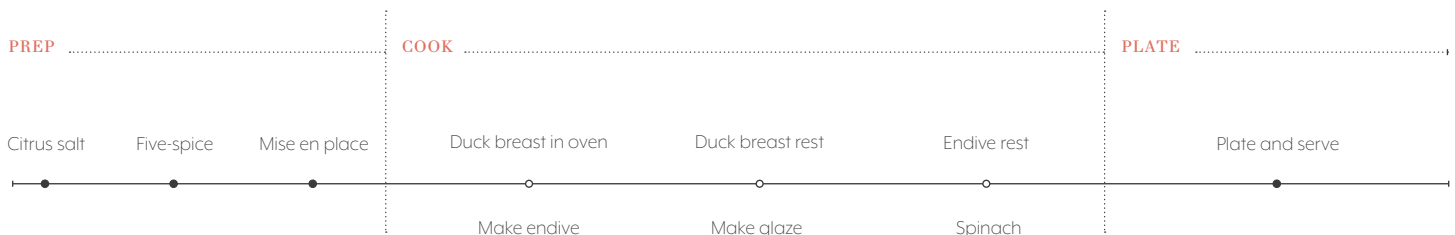
This dish is a harmonious play of bitter and sweet, earthiness and richness. The duck breast, crisped in its own rendered fat is the hero, the cherries add sweetness that plays against the bitter endive, and earthy spinach grounds the dish.

Duck has a naturally fatty skin that melts flavor into the meat as it cooks, so always start it with the skin side down. That way the fat can render against the hot pan and when you turn the meat it will sear the skinless side in its own flavorful fat. Salting the skin before you start cooking helps to draw out moisture so that the skin cooks up crisp as the fat renders out. When trimming duck, you can save the bits of fatty skin to top the duck during cooking as Gordon demonstrates, or save it to render the fat and use in another dish. Gordon loves to use duck fat when sautéing vegetables—especially mushrooms.

Letting the meat rest before slicing is essential so that the juices have time to recirculate into the meat. A good rule to follow is to let the meat rest at least as long as it took to cook in the oven. For this dish, the 8 minutes in the oven equals an 8-minute rest before slicing to plate.

Although endive is often used in salads, Gordon uses a salt and sugar marinade to caramelize them and bleed out the bitterness. As you sauté, watch for liquid to come out of the endive—that is the bitterness on its way out. When the endive has caramelized, the cut side should have edges that look like the top of a crème brûlée and the centers will give little resistance to the tip of your knife.

RECIPE TIMELINE



CRISPY DUCK, RED ENDIVE, AND SPINACH

*Prep*

- The black cherry glaze can be made up to five days ahead of time. Store refrigerated in an airtight container.
- If you're cooking for a large party, the duck breasts can be seared ahead of time to render out the fat. Undercook the meat slightly and finish cooking to medium rare when you're ready to serve.
- The spinach can be sautéed the day before and warmed when you are ready to serve.

Ingredient Notes

- If you can get duck from your butcher, use within three to five days or freeze for up to six months. Frozen duck breasts from the grocery store are a good substitute but keep in mind that once a protein is frozen and thawed it cannot be re-frozen.
- Frozen cherries can be used instead of fresh cherries but keep in mind that frozen cherries hold more water content, so thaw and strain before use.
- If you can't find red endive use radicchio cut into wedges. Use one radicchio wedge in place of the three red endive halves for plating.
- Gordon mentions that traditional sauces can take days to prepare, from roasting bones to caramelizing mirepoix to several hours-long reduction stages in order to concentrate the flavor and achieve a consistency similar to that of a glaze. The thickening agents in classic sauces are usually demi-glace, tomato paste, roux, or fat. The cherry glaze in this recipe was designed to take far less time than a sauce but achieve a similar depth of flavor. It uses honey as a natural thickener.

Dietary Restrictions

- To make this dish gluten-free, replace the soy sauce with tamari—a fermented soy sauce that uses little to no wheat. Be sure to check that the brand you buy does not contain wheat.

Crispy Five-Spice Duck, Black Cherry Duck Glaze, Caramelized Red Endive, and Sautéed Spinach

Serves 4

Five-Spice Seasoning

2 tablespoons star anise seeds
2 tablespoons cinnamon seeds
½ tablespoon fennel seed
1 teaspoon cloves, whole
½ tablespoon Szechuan peppercorn
or black peppercorn
2 tablespoons kosher salt

Lightly toast each spice individually in a sauté pan on medium heat, or on a sheet tray in an oven at 375°F for 4 to 8 minutes or until each spice is fragrant and lightly golden-colored. Remove from heat and let the spice cool completely. Crush each spice in a mortar and pestle to a medium-fine consistency and mix with salt.

Orange Salt

2 navel oranges
3 tablespoons Maldon salt

Zest oranges into a mortar and pestle and add Maldon salt. Crush the zest and salt together until fragrant and broken down. Store in an airtight container, in a plastic or ceramic container wrapped tightly with plastic wrap, or in a ziplock bag in a cool, dry place for up to two weeks.

Crispy Five-Spice Duck Breast

4 9-ounce duck breasts
2 tablespoons kosher salt
Maldon salt to taste
4 tablespoons five-spice seasoning
16 thyme sprigs
6 garlic cloves, crushed
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375°F. Lay the duck breasts skin side down on a cutting board. Use a sharp knife to trim off the excess skin so that the remaining skin is the same shape as the breast. Reserve the trimmings for cooking.

Lightly score the skins of the duck breasts using a sharp paring knife to score the skin diagonally ¼ to ⅓ inches apart down the skin. Then rotate the breasts 90° and score again intersecting the previous lines to make a crosshatched pattern.

Sprinkle salt and five-spice onto a sheet tray or baking pan. Lay the duck breasts skin side up into the pan. Season heavily with more five-spice and salt and pepper to taste. Rub the duck breasts evenly in the salt and five-spice seasoning and let rest for 2 minutes before searing.

Crispy Five-Spice Duck, Black Cherry Duck Glaze, Caramelized Red Endive, and Sautéed Spinach

Serves 4

Crispy Five-Spice Duck Breast *continued*

Heat a large cast-iron pan on low for 3 minutes. Lay the duck breasts in, skin side down, and gradually increase the heat to medium. Add the skin trimmings into the pan. Sear skin side down for 3 to 5 minutes or until most of the fat has rendered and the skin is golden brown, flipping the breast over occasionally. Do not cook breasts on high heat or the skin will shrink a tremendous amount and get chewy instead of crispy.

Add the thyme sprigs and garlic cloves and sauté for 1 minute. Set the thyme, garlic, and duck skin trimmings evenly on top of the breasts with the skin side down so the thyme and garlic can absorb into the meat while roasting. Place in the center rack of oven and roast for 8 to 10 minutes, or until slightly springy when pressed. The internal temperature should reach 135°F for medium rare. Transfer to a sheet tray or plate to rest 8 to 10 minutes before slicing.

Caramelized Red Endive

6 heads red endive
4 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 tablespoon aged balsamic vinegar
1 orange for zest and juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons chicken stock
Salt to taste

Peel off the outer two leaves of the endive and use a paring knife to trim off a small amount of the stem. Make sure to only cut off the tough stem—too close to the leaves and they will fall off during cooking. Cut the trimmed endive in half lengthwise. Place on a sheet tray cut side up and sprinkle with salt. Dust all over with powdered sugar, turning to cover every side. Drizzle the cut sides with aged balsamic vinegar and finish with the zest of half the orange.

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large nonstick sauté pan over medium heat. Place the endive cut side down into the hot pan and caramelize the endive until golden brown, about 1 to 2 minutes. Dust any remaining powdered sugar into the pan. Flip the endive over and deglaze the pan with orange juice. Add the remaining olive oil and orange zest. Braise gently for 2 to 3 minutes until the endive is slightly soft and the liquid becomes the consistency of a glaze. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

Crispy Five-Spice Duck, Black Cherry Duck Glaze, Caramelized Red Endive, and Sautéed Spinach

Serves 4

Black Cherry Duck Glaze

3 tablespoons honey
1½ tablespoons soy sauce
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
6 ounces chicken stock
1 cup black cherries, pitted and halved

Drain the pan from cooking the duck breasts and add the honey to the pan over medium heat.

Caramelize the honey for 2 minutes or until it slightly thickens and begins to darken. Deglaze the pan with red wine vinegar, shaking the pan frequently so the liquid can constantly coat the pan and receive even heat.

Once the vinegar is almost evaporated and the liquid is a syrupy consistency, add the chicken stock and let the liquid cook down again for 3 to 5 minutes, or until most of the chicken stock has reduced. Add soy sauce and reduce until thickened again to a syrupy consistency. Add any juices gathered from the resting duck. Taste and adjust the seasoning if needed. Finally, add the cherries and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat and let the cherries finish cooking in the glaze off the heat.

Sautéed Spinach

4 cups spinach
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon shallots, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
Salt to taste

Heat a large sauté pan with olive oil on medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Season the pan with a pinch of salt before adding in the spinach. Add the spinach and season with another pinch of salt and a crack of black pepper. Let the spinach cook for 10 seconds and add the garlic and shallots over the top. Use a large spoon or tongs to flip the spinach over so the shallots and garlic can cook in the bottom of the pan. Make sure not to brown any of the ingredients. Toss the leaves every few seconds to have all of the spinach touch the hot surface of the pan, no longer than 20 seconds. Take the spinach off the heat when all the leaves are wilted and vibrant green.

Crispy Five-Spice Duck, Black Cherry Duck Glaze, Caramelized Red Endive, and Sautéed Spinach

Serves 4

Plate + Garnish

Orange salt

Fan three endive across the top center of the plates with the core ends touching the center of the plate and spoon any excess cooking liquid over the endive. Place a heaping spoonful of the sautéed spinach slightly down center of the plates. Pull the tenderloins off each of the duck breasts and place on top of the spinach. With the duck breasts skin side down on the cutting board, slice the breasts into 4 to 5 pieces. Lay the sliced breasts shingled over the spinach. Spoon 2 to 3 spoonfuls of the cherries around the bottom of the plate. Spoon glaze over the cherries and duck breast. Finish with a pinch of orange salt.

CRISPY DUCK, RED ENDIVE, AND SPINACH



INGREDIENTS

2½ tablespoons Ketel One vodka
 1½ tablespoons Chambord
 2 teaspoons Cointreau
 2½ tablespoons cranberry juice
 A touch of grenadine syrup
 Egg white from one egg
 Edible gold powder, to garnish
 Edible flowers to, garnish

METHOD

1. Add the vodka, Chambord, Cointreau, cranberry juice, grenadine syrup, and egg white into a cocktail shaker.
 2. Shake the cocktail until there is a white foam on top.
 3. Pour the shaken cocktail onto ice to keep it cool.
 4. Serve the cocktail in a goblet or balloon glass, with more ice at the bottom.
 5. Add the edible gold powder and a few edible flowers on top to garnish.
- Take It Further*
- Spices were not a big part of cooking in Gordon's upbringing, but as he began to learn more about them he was excited about how much they could change a dish. Read Gordon's Basic Spice Kit on the following pages for more on each component of the five-spice blend, as well as the other spices Gordon considers essential for your pantry.
 - This amount of five-spice yields about ½ cup so if you plan on making this dish often, multiply the batch. If you store this homemade five-spice in an airtight container in a cool, dark place it will retain prime freshness for six months (but can still be potent for two to three years).
 - Dish soap is not a friend of cast-iron. When you're done cooking, clean your cast-iron pans according to Gordon's preferred method. Clean them while still warm to make it easier to remove any food stuck to the bottom or warm over low heat before you start the cleaning process. First add a little vegetable oil and a tablespoon or so of kosher salt into the pan and scrub with a sponge. Then rinse the pan with hot water and dry thoroughly to prevent rust spots. Lastly add a teaspoon or so of vegetable oil or shortening and use a paper towel to season the pan by rubbing the oil into all of the inside surfaces. This helps build a nonstick quality over time and maintains a barrier between moisture and the metal.
 - Gordon instructs you to bring the duck breast "to temp" (meaning to room temperature) before cooking—and that goes for any protein. This helps with even cooking because if the center of the piece of meat is at room temperature rather than fridge temperature when you're ready to cook, it will take less time for the center to reach the desired internal temperature. As the heat works its way from the outside of the meat (the thinnest part) toward the center (the thickest part), both parts will cook at a similar rate, resulting in evenly cooked, juicy meat.
 - Use leftover duck breast in place of the duck legs in Gordon's salad recipe on the following page.

Beverage Pairing

- Gordon recommends you pair this dish with his version of a tiki classic—the Bird of Paradise, following the recipe on the left.

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CRISPY DUCK SALAD

Additional recipe / Courtesy of Gordonramsayrestaurants.com

Serves 6

Dressing

Thumb-sized piece of fresh root ginger, peeled

1 lemongrass stalk, cut in half

1 red chili, halved

Juice of 1 lime

Juice of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon dark soy sauce

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Salad

4 duck legs

Juice of 1 large orange

6½ ounce ketchup

3 tablespoons runny honey

2 tablespoons + 2 teaspoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons + 2 teaspoons sesame oil

3½ ounce watercress

½ red chili, seeded and julienned

½ green chili, seeded and julienned

Thumb-sized piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and julienned

⅓ daikon, julienned

10 radishes, sliced

Large handful cilantro, leaves picked

1 bunch of spring onions, trimmed and sliced

2 tablespoons mixed black and white sesame seeds, toasted

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C) fan/Gas 5.
2. Place the duck legs on a baking tray, season with salt, then cook in the oven for 2 hours until tender and crispy.
3. While the duck legs are cooking, make the dressing. Put the ginger into a bottle or jar with the lemongrass and chili halves. Pour the lime and lemon juices into the bottle, add the soy sauce and olive oil, season with salt and pepper, then put the lid on and shake the bottle well. Leave to infuse until you are ready to serve. Strain before using.
4. When the duck legs are completely crispy, remove from the oven and leave to cool. Once they are cool enough to handle, pick the meat from the bones, discarding any soft fat. Use two forks to do this—the meat should come away from the bones very easily. Place the picked meat in a bowl.
5. Mix the orange juice, tomato ketchup, honey, soy sauce and sesame oil together in a bowl. Add this sauce to the shredded duck and stir through until well mixed.
6. Combine the watercress, chilies, ginger, daikon and radishes in a separate large serving bowl, add the salad dressing (minus the aromatics) and toss to mix. Add half of the coriander leaves, spring onions and toasted sesame seeds and toss to mix.
7. Serve the salad on a platter or individual plates with the crispy duck on top, then sprinkle with the remaining coriander, spring onions and sesame seeds.

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Basic Spice Kit

From *Gordon Ramsay's Home Cooking*, reproduced courtesy of the author and Hachette Book Group, USA.

We're probably all guilty of having a few jars of spice festering at the back of our cabinets, but you should really have a clear-out at least every 12 months. Spices deteriorate very quickly, and after six months they'll have lost most of their flavor, especially if they are already ground. So the first rule is not to buy in bulk. Only purchase what you think you will need within the next six months or so. Keep them in an airtight container, away from direct sunlight and heat (a tin is better than a jar for this reason). Whole spices will stay fresh longer than ground ones, so, where possible, buy whole and grind as and when you need them. Listed opposite are the basic spices I keep on hand.

SALT

I never have refined table salt in my house, not even for salting vegetable water. I always use sea salt, fleur de sel from Brittany out of preference, but Maldon salt is very good too. I find the minerals in it give it a more complex flavor, and again you need less of it. If you watch Italians cooking pasta, you'll see them actually taste the boiling water to make sure it is seasoned properly. They will use 2 teaspoons for every quart of water. It should be a similar ratio for boiling vegetables.

PEPPER

All pepper is not the same either, although the three types—black, green, and white—all come from the same bush. Black peppercorns are fully mature and have the strongest flavor. Green peppercorns are immature berries that are either dried or brined. They are milder and much used in Asian cooking. White peppercorns are black ones with the husk removed. They tend to have a more nose-prickling quality but lack the brute strength of black ones. They are generally used for aesthetic purposes in a white sauce, for example, where you might not want to have black specks. You certainly don't need to worry about stocking both, but, as with all spices, it is better to keep them whole and grind them as and when you need them. The recipe for Szechuan Dan Dan Noodles uses Szechuan pepper, which is not actually pepper at all, but the pod of an Asian berry. It has a mild lemony flavor and causes a slight tingling around the mouth when you eat it.

CARDAMOM

A versatile spice with a warm, sweet flavor. You can either add the pod whole, or crush it to extract the seeds, which can then be ground if you like.

Chiu Powder

Made of ground dried chilies, the powder can vary in potency, so treat with caution. Cayenne pepper is specifically from the cayenne chili.

CINNAMON

The rolled bark of a Sri Lankan tree, cinnamon goes particularly well with sugar. It's also used a lot in meaty savory dishes such as Moroccan tagines.

CLOVES

These dried flower buds, with their medicinal flavor, are essential in dishes as diverse as roasted ham, apple crumble, and mulled wine. Go easy with them, as they can easily overpower.

CORIANDER

These dried berries have a sweet aromatic flavor that bears no similarity to the herb that produces them. Great with cumin in homemade burgers or poaching liquor for fish.

CUMIN

These small seeds have a strong, pungent aroma that lends a familiar backnote to many Indian and Mexican dishes. A little goes a long way.

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FENNEL SEEDS

The seeds of the fennel plant have a more pronounced anise flavor than the bulbs and go particularly well with pork.

FENUGREEK

A bitter Mediterranean seed used in curry powders, with an aroma similar to celery. An essential part of homemade ras el hanout, a Moroccan spice mix also containing cinnamon, cloves, coriander, and cumin.

GINGER

I use fresh ginger where possible because it has a much more lively, zingy flavor. But ground ginger is also useful, particularly in baking.

MUSTARD SEEDS

We are used to seeing these in grainy mustard. Their natural fieriness is tempered when they are roasted and they become nuttier in flavor. Essential in Indian cooking.

NUTMEG AND MACE

Both these spices come from the nutmeg tree, mace being the outer lattice covering of the nutmeg seed. Both have a warm, earthy, aromatic flavor, but mace is slightly stronger and sweeter; it works particularly well in custard-based desserts. Nutmeg is essential in a traditional white sauce or rice pudding.

PAPRIKA

A bright red powder made from dried peppers. It can be sweet or hot, smoked or unsmoked, and is a characteristic feature of Spanish and Hungarian cooking.

STAR ANISE

I love star anise more than any other spice. It has a fragrant, slightly sweet anise flavor and is a key ingredient in Chinese five-spice powder. It lends itself to everything from lamb casserole to tarte tatin.

SUMAC

A dark reddish spice, sumac is widely used in Middle Eastern cooking, imparting a tangy, lemony flavor.

TURMERIC

A bright yellow spice that comes from a dried root. It gives curry powder its hallmark color and has an earthy, mustardy flavor.