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Sweet Carolina

Duck from the Deep South



Chef Sean Brock earned so many accolades for his Southern cuisine at McCrady's that his new Charleston venture, Husk, really needed to wow the city's tastemakers in order to meet expectations. At Husk, he's ingeniously redefining Carolina cooking with a larder of heirloom ingredients. For example, local duck breasts get a piney juniper rub and a sweet orange sauce for a cosmopolitan dish that springs from Southern sensibilities. Brock's recipe isn't

hard to replicate at home, though duck can toughen quickly, so keep a close eye on it as it cooks.

Juniper-Rubbed Duck Breast with Delicata Squash

Recipe adapted from Sean Brock, Husk, Charleston, South Carolina

Yield: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

Duck

2 tablespoons juniper berries
1 tablespoon black pepper
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon sugar
Six 6-ounce duck breasts
2 tablespoons grapeseed oil, divided

Squash and Rice

2 pounds delicata squash--peeled, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 3 cups)
Zest of 1 orange (about 2 tablespoons)
2 cups fresh orange juice (from about 4 oranges), strained
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
5 thyme sprigs
1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 cups cooked rice, kept warm



DIRECTIONS

1. Make the duck: Preheat the oven to 200°. In a spice grinder, combine the juniper berries with the black pepper, salt and sugar and grind into a coarse powder. With a sharp paring knife, score the duck skin in a crosshatch pattern (without cutting into the flesh) and rub both sides of each breast with the spice mixture. Wrap the duck tightly in plastic wrap and let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.
2. While the duck rests, make the squash: In a medium saucepan, combine the squash, orange zest, orange juice, butter and thyme and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until the squash is tender, about 12 minutes.
3. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the squash to a baking sheet, cover with tinfoil and place in the oven to keep warm. Reduce the braising liquid over medium-high heat until syrupy, about 10 minutes. Remove the sauce from the heat, add the vinegar and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and keep warm.
4. In each of 2 large skillets, warm 1 tablespoon of the grapeseed oil over medium-high heat. Add 3 duck breasts to each skillet, skin side down, and cook over medium heat until the skin is crispy and well browned, about 6 to 8 minutes. Turn and cook until the duck is medium-rare, about 5 minutes longer. Transfer the duck to a cutting board, cover loosely with foil and let rest for 10 minutes.
5. Divide the rice and squash among 6 plates. Thinly slice the duck crosswise and divide among the plates. Drizzle with the orange sauce and serve immediately.
