

Churston Traditional

FARM SHOP

Where you'll find the West Country's finest food and drink...

CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES DECEMBER 2016

GAME ON!

Whatever your plans for Christmas eating December is *the* month for game – and we've plenty of it to tempt you. Whether your taste is for venison or – at the other end of the scale but woefully undervalued, we believe – rabbit when you eat wild meat you are eating something which is healthy and generally low-fat.

And there's more. Game shooting helps create jobs in the countryside and when you eat rabbit you're doing the farmers a favour because rabbits continue to be the cause of major damage to crops and pastures.

Game always delivers big flavours and can therefore stand up to other, strongly-flavoured ingredients, including alcohol in all its various forms. And there really is nothing like game-based food for taking the chill off a winter evening.

VENISON, PHEASANT AND RABBIT CASSEROLE

Ingredients for six. Two pheasant breasts, 700g cubed venison, deboned saddle and back legs of a rabbit, all cubed, tablespoon plain flour, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper, four rashers dry-cured smoked streaky bacon, 50g butter, twelve shallots, 75g button mushrooms, quartered, two large carrots and a medium turnip, cut into dice, glass each sherry and port, 300ml each brown ale and beef stock, strip of orange peel, small bunch fresh thyme, two bay leaves, dessertspoon soft brown sugar, four crushed and chopped garlic cloves, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Heat the oven to 180C gas mark 4, spread the flour on a baking sheet and cook for eight to nine minutes or until lightly browned. Allow to cool and mix in the salt and pepper. Place the sherry, port and brown ale in a small pan and reduce by one third over a high heat. In a large frying pan add the bacon cut into strips and dry-fry until crisped. Remove with a slotted spoon leaving the fat behind. Add the butter and heat until foaming, coat the chunks of meat with the flour and fry a few at a time until lightly browned. Reserve with the bacon. Fry the mushrooms and shallots until lightly browned (add more butter if necessary), then return the meat and bacon to the pan and add the remaining ingredients, including just enough beef stock to cover. Transfer to a deep casserole, cover and cook for two hours, topping up with a little more stock if necessary. Serve with dumplings and steamed cabbage.

PARTRIDGE HOT POT

Ingredients for four. Two tablespoons olive oil, four oven-ready partridge, kilo peeled and thinly-sliced potatoes, two sliced leeks, two tablespoons plain flour, 300ml chicken stock, 150ml dry cider, teaspoon soft, light brown sugar, three to four sprigs of young thyme, chopped, 25g butter.

Method. Preheat the oven to 180C gas mark 4. Parboil the potato slices for two minutes, drain and rinse in cold, running water. Heat half the oil in a flameproof casserole and brown the partridges for five minutes, turning frequently. Reserve. Add the remaining oil to the casserole, fry the leek for three to four minutes, stir in the flour then incorporate the stock and cider and add the thyme and sugar. Place the partridges in the casserole, season with salt and pepper, cover with overlapping slices of potato, dot with the butter and bake for an hour and a half.

PHEASANT WITH PARSNIP AND APPLE MASH

Ingredients for four. 750g floury potatoes such as Maris Piper, half a pound 225g parsnips, a large dessert apple, peeled and cut into chunks, two ounces 50g butter, three tablespoons crème fraiche and two each of fresh chopped chives and parsley, two teaspoons plain flour, four to six pheasant breasts, two teaspoons olive oil, 50ml white wine, 200ml chicken stock.

Method. For the mash: Peel potatoes and parsnips and boil in separate pans for 12-15 minutes, adding the apple to the parsnip for the final three minutes. Drain well. Place in one pan, stir over heat for five minutes to remove moisture then, away from the heat mash in half the butter, crème fraiche, herbs and seasoning. Keep warm until ready to serve. Mix the remainder of the butter and the flour together. Heat the oil in a non-stick pan and fry the pheasant breast, skin side down, for one minute, turn over, and add the wine to the pan, allowing it to boil rapidly until reduced by about two thirds. Pour in the stock and reduce the heat and simmer for five minutes. Remove the pheasant breasts and mix in the flour and butter to thicken the sauce. Serve the pheasant breasts on top of the mash with the wine sauce poured over.

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