

Discovering more...

Once you have taken the plunge and started cooking with game, you will find that so many mouthwatering dishes are possible you will want to find out more – not just about the seven types of game featured in this booklet, but about other varieties, too. Great inspiration will be found in the following books.

GAME FOR ALL Nichola Fletcher, Victor Gollancz, 1992

THE GREAT GAME BOOK Absolute Press, 1993

GOOD GAME Victoria Jardine-Paterson and Colin McKelvie, Swanhill Press, 1993

NICOLA COX ON GAME COOKERY Nicola Cox, Victor Gollancz, 1993

GAME COOKERY Angela Humphreys, David & Charles, 1986

PERFECT VENISON Nichola Fletcher, telephone (01203) 465957

Alternatively look in the increasingly prominent game chapters of some of our bestselling modern cookbooks, for example those by Delia Smith, Sophie Grigson, Nick Nairn and Marguerite Patten.

Enjoy!



This booklet is published by the Game Marketing Executive, which works in the United Kingdom to promote the consumption of game.

For further information write to the Game Marketing Executive,
PO Box 11170, London W2 1GS

Photography by Nik Milner
Recipes by Terry Farris
Edited by Louisa Ayland

From banquets
to barbecues...

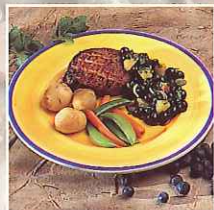
Discover the
great taste
of game



From banquets to barbecues – ideal for any occasion



Pheasant



Duck



Pigeon



Grouse



Venison



Rabbit



Partridge

British game is enjoying a rebirth. Fed up with the bland and the battery farmed, discerning cooks are rediscovering its flavour.

For centuries game has been central to our culinary tradition. Roasted with seasonal fruits, casseroled or in pies, it has been savoured by kings and peasants alike. Now in the 1990s new ideas are emerging.

Such is the versatility of game that modern cooks are delighting in reinventing it. To suit lighter tastes they are using it to incredible effect in stir-fries, curries, salads and grills. Traditional dishes abound, too. The variety just gets greater.

Supermarkets and butchers have responded to this interest by increasing the range of game they sell. Buying ready-prepared game has never been easier, and with the help of this easy-to-follow booklet, the discovery can be yours.

- Game is available ready-to-cook in supermarkets and butchers, often with accompanying cooking suggestions.
- Game is an exceptionally nutritious meat. It is high in protein, low in cholesterol and particularly low in fat.
- Game as sold today has a delicious flavour. Only if hung for a long time, as used to be popular, does it become particularly strong.
- Game roams free in open spaces, largely unaffected by chemicals and the stress of factory farming.
- Game is traditionally in season during autumn and winter, but wild pigeon and rabbit are available throughout the year, as are the farmed varieties of venison, duck and rabbit.

COOKING TIPS

- Rather like beef, game can be served from pink to well done according to taste. Roasting times in this booklet will give you medium to well-done game. To serve pink, simply reduce the cooking times and increase the temperatures.
- Because game is so low in fat, care must be taken to stop it drying out. Smearing the meat in butter is the traditional way to keep it moist when roasting. However, the low fat option is to use a covered roaster or foil tent to keep the juices in. Only a minimal amount of oil or butter is then needed, especially if cooking quickly on a high temperature. Any excess fat can be skimmed off the juices.
- Marination before cooking is particularly good for less tender meat and adds flavour and moisture. Try a combination of a good oil, wine and herbs.

All recipes are intended to feed four.

The true taste of the country

Pheasant are by far the most plentiful of British game species and are available fresh from October to February, and frozen out of season. They can be served roasted, casseroled or jointed, and the breasts, now often sold alone, can be used as you would chicken breasts – grilled, in salads and even in sandwiches.



TIPS

- Allow one pheasant for two people.
- To add flavour when roasting place a garlic clove, half an onion or orange and parsley into each bird.
- To keep moist place a tiny knob of butter and half a raw potato inside each bird. Rub a little oil or butter onto the breasts, and place under a high-peaked tin foil tent until 5-10 minutes before the end of the cooking time.
- Cook for around an hour at 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 with a little orange juice, port or wine. Use the juices to make gravy later, with game stock if you have it.
- Serve with watercress, Brussels sprout purée and cranberry jelly.

Pan fried pheasant breasts with orange and walnuts

4 pheasant breasts, boned (from 2 pheasant)
1 tbsp walnut oil
150ml (5fl oz) chicken or game stock
2 oranges
50g (3 1/4oz) walnut pieces
4 tbsp plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
15g (1/2oz) cold butter
Salt and pepper

- 1) Fry the walnuts for a minute and remove from the frying pan with a slotted spoon.
- 2) Grate the zest from one of the oranges and add to the flour. Squeeze the juice and reserve, carefully segmenting the other orange for the garnish. (To do this remove the peel and pith with a sharp knife, cutting between the membranes to remove the segments.) Catch any juice and add to the other.
- 3) Coat the breasts in the flour and fry in the reserved oil over a medium high heat until golden on both sides, about 3 minutes, then remove from the pan.
- 4) Add the stock and orange juice to the pan and bring to the boil, scraping up any bits.
- 5) Lower the heat and return the breasts, simmering for around 5 minutes until cooked.
- 6) Remove the breasts to keep warm, strain the sauce into a clean saucepan, boil and reduce to around 150ml (5 fl oz) and slightly syrupy. Turn down the heat and whisk in the cold butter.
- 7) Serve the pheasant with the sauce, chopped walnuts and orange segments. Try bulgar wheat made with chicken stock, mushrooms and green peas as the accompaniment with a green vegetable.



Pot roasted pheasant with gooseberries

2 pheasant
4 medium leeks, cut into chunks
3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
500g (1lb 2oz) gooseberries
2 tbsp gooseberry jam
200ml (7fl oz) red wine
200ml (7fl oz) chicken or game stock
1 tbsp sunflower oil
30g (1oz) unsalted butter
1 bay leaf
1 level tbsp plain flour
Salt and pepper

- 1) Preheat the oven to 170°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3.
- 2) Heat the oil and butter in an oven-proof casserole. Season the pheasant and cook over a medium hot heat until browned all over and remove from the pan.
- 3) Add the chopped pieces of leek and carrot and fry for 5 minutes until beginning to soften. Add the flour and continue to cook for a minute.
- 4) Add the wine, stock, jam, gooseberries and bay leaf. Stir, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat.
- 5) Return the pheasant to the casserole and cook in the oven for 50-60 minutes. Serve with potato and celeriac purée.

PHEASANT

Stuffed pheasant breasts with mushroom and thyme sauce

4 pheasant breasts, boned (from 2 pheasant)
 1/2 onion, finely chopped
 1 stick celery, finely chopped
 1 clove garlic, crushed
 75g (2³/₄oz) unsalted butter
 300g (10¹/₂oz) mushrooms
 30g (1oz) fresh breadcrumbs
 1 tbsp fresh thyme, finely chopped
 2 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
 200ml (7fl oz) dry white wine
 150ml (5fl oz) double cream
 Salt and pepper

1) To make the stuffing, melt two-thirds of the butter and gently fry the onion, celery and garlic until soft. Finely chop a third of the mushrooms, add to the onion mixture and cook for three minutes. Remove from the heat and cool.

2) Place the breadcrumbs in a bowl, add the mushroom mixture, parsley, half the thyme and salt and pepper.

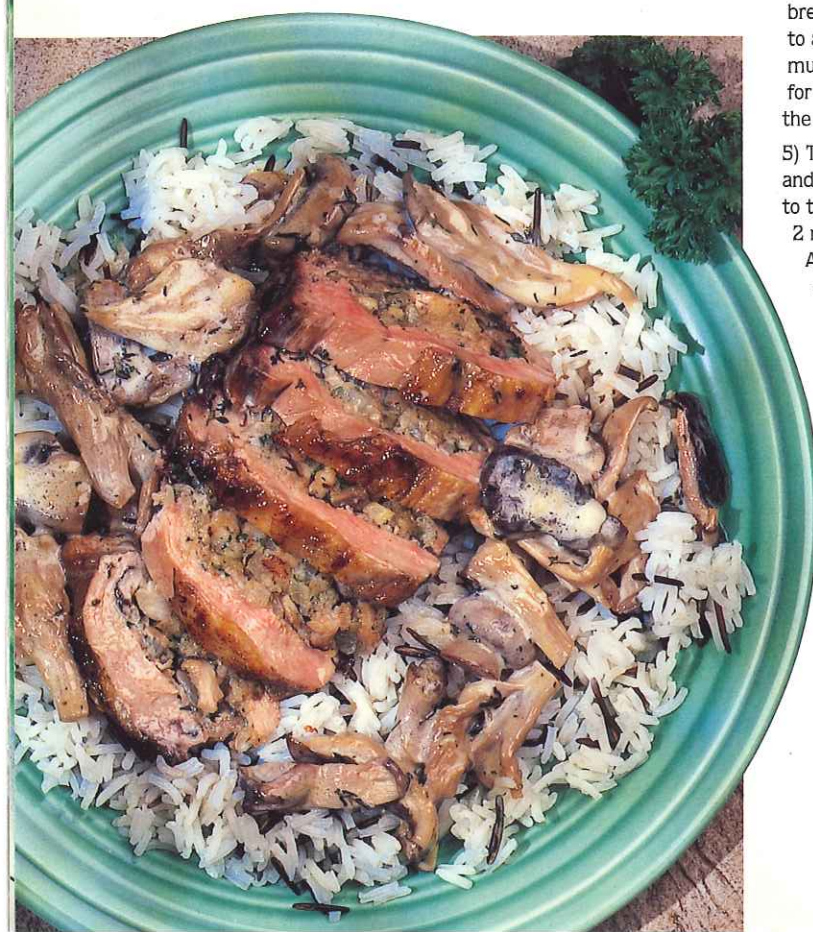
3) Lay the breasts flat and with a sharp knife slit the side of each and stuff with the mixture.

4) Melt the remaining butter in a large lidded pan and cook the pheasant breasts skin side down until golden brown. Roughly chop the rest of the

mushrooms, turn the breasts over, and reduce to a low heat. Add the mushrooms, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Then remove the breasts and keep warm.

5) Tip into the pan the wine and remaining thyme, bring to the boil and simmer for 2 minutes reducing by half. Add the cream and simmer for 2 minutes.

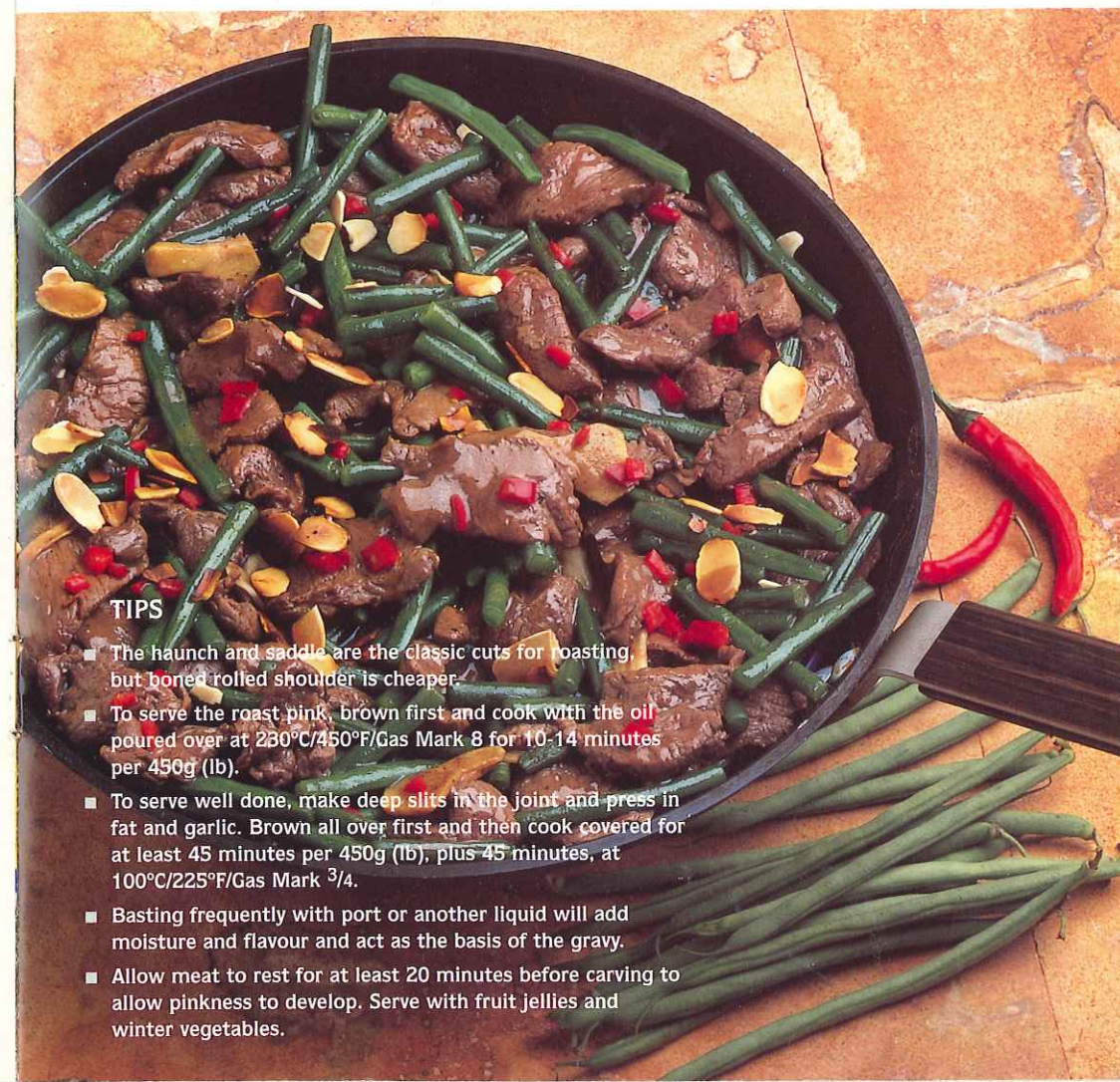
6) To serve slice the breasts in 1¹/₄cm (1/2in) slices and lay on a bed of Basmati and wild rice with the sauce spooned over the top.



VENISON

A cut above the rest

Venison is a beautifully flavoured red meat which is gaining great popularity of late as a versatile, low-fat alternative to beef that is available all year round. The more tender cuts are suited to quick methods of cooking like grilling and pan-frying, while others benefit from roasting or casseroles. Look out, too, for steaks and sausages for the barbecue in the summer.



TIPS

- The haunch and saddle are the classic cuts for roasting, but boned rolled shoulder is cheaper.
- To serve the roast pink, brown first and then cook with the oil poured over at 230°C/450°F/Gas Mark 8 for 10-14 minutes per 450g (1lb).
- To serve well done, make deep slits in the joint and press in fat and garlic. Brown all over first and then cook covered for at least 45 minutes per 450g (1lb), plus 45 minutes, at 100°C/225°F/Gas Mark 3/4.
- Basting frequently with port or another liquid will add moisture and flavour and act as the basis of the gravy.
- Allow meat to rest for at least 20 minutes before carving to allow pinkness to develop. Serve with fruit jellies and winter vegetables.

Venison and French bean stir-fry

(Pictured on previous page)

- 500g (2lb 3oz) venison
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 4 tbsp dry sherry
- 1 clove of garlic
- 2½cm (1in) piece of fresh ginger
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped (optional)
- 300g (10½oz) French beans
- 1 tsp cornflour
- 50g (1¾oz) toasted flaked almonds
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil
- Freshly ground black pepper

- 1) Slice the venison into thin, flat strips for stir-frying. Peel and thinly slice the garlic and ginger. Combine the venison strips with the garlic, ginger, soy sauce, sherry and 4 tablespoons of water. Season with black pepper and leave to marinate at room temperature for 15 minutes.
- 2) Top and tail the beans and cut in half. Cook in boiling salted water until tender and drain. Pour the marinade from the venison. Mix the cornflour with the marinade and put aside.
- 3) While the beans are cooking heat the wok or heavy frying pan, add the oil, and when smoking hot add the chopped chilli, if using, and fry for a few seconds. Then fry the venison, garlic and ginger in batches, not overloading so the wok fries, not stews.
- 4) Return the batches to the pan, add the beans and marinade and, stirring, bring to the boil.
- 5) Serve immediately with rice and sprinkled with almonds, or alternatively cold as a salad.



Venison steak au poivre with garlic cream sauce

- 4 venison steaks
- 2 tbsp whole black peppercorns
- 2 heads of garlic, separated into cloves, skins left on
- 100g (3½oz) butter
- 200ml (7fl oz) game or chicken stock
- 50ml (2fl oz) double cream

- 1) Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Place the cloves of garlic and butter in a small oven-proof dish. Cover and bake for 45-50 minutes until the garlic is soft.
- 2) Remove the garlic and scrape the pulp from the skins, reserving the butter. Liquidise the pulp with the stock, pass through a fine sieve into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Whisk in the cream and season with salt and pepper.
- 3) Crush the peppercorns coarsely and coat both sides of the steak.
- 4) Heat 2 tablespoons of the reserved garlic butter in a frying pan and when very hot cook the steaks for about 4-5 minutes per side.
- 5) Serve with the sauce, roasted baby new potatoes in their skins and a green salad.

Barbecued venison and apricot kebabs with spiced Greek yoghurt dip

- 500g (1lb 2oz) tender venison
- 4 onions
- 4 tbsp apricot jam
- 100ml (3½fl oz) white wine
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tsp medium curry powder
- 200g (7oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots
- 300g (10½oz) chestnut mushrooms

FOR THE DIP

- 200g (7oz) Greek yoghurt
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- ½ medium onion finely sliced
- 2 tsp medium curry powder
- 1 tbsp apricot jam
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

- 1) Cut the venison into 3cm (1¼in) cubes, place in a shallow bowl, and cut the onion into quarters.
- 2) Place the jam, white wine, bay leaf and curry powder in a small saucepan and melt over a low heat. Allow to cool slightly, then pour over the venison and leave to marinate for several hours in the fridge.
- 3) When ready to cook, thread 8 metal skewers with the venison, onion, dried apricots and mushrooms.
- 4) To make the dip cook the onion in the oil over a low heat until soft. Add the curry powder and cook for a minute. Add the apricot jam, stir and cook for another minute and allow to cool slightly. Combine with the Greek yoghurt, lemon juice and seasoning.
- 5) Cook the kebabs on a hot barbecue (or under a preheated grill) turning once and brushing with the marinade.
- 6) Serve with the dip and couscous made with chicken or vegetable stock, with spring onions and cherry tomatoes.



Duck breasts with blueberry, orange and mint salsa

4 duck breasts
2 oranges

FOR THE SALSA

200g (7oz) blueberries (or cranberries)
2 spring onions
1 orange
Pinch cinnamon
2 tbsp chopped mint leaves
Tabasco sauce

1) Trim and score the skin of the duck breasts and put in a shallow bowl. Grate and squeeze over the top the rind from one orange and the juice of two. Leave to marinate for several hours in the fridge.

2) To make the salsa, remove the peel and pith from the orange and cut each segment into 3-4 triangular pieces, reserving the juice. Place the blueberries, cinnamon and juice into a saucepan and heat gently until the berries have softened slightly, around 4 minutes. (If using cranberries add 50g (1³/₄oz) sugar.) Allow to cool.

3) Chop the spring onions into thin diagonal slices and chop the mint.

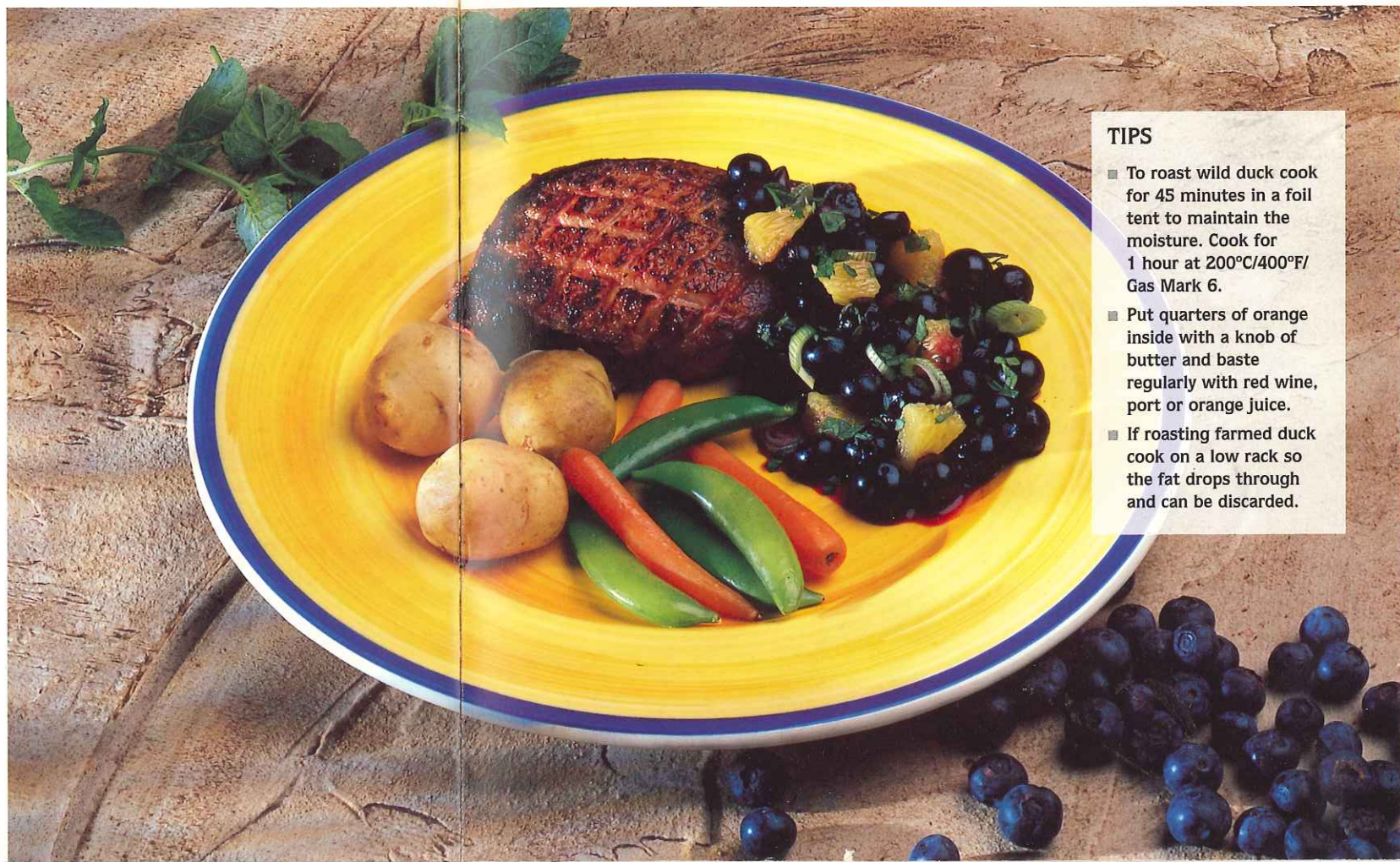
4) When the berries are cool, stir in the chopped orange segments, spring onion, mint and a few drops of Tabasco.

5) To cook the duck, remove from the marinade and dry off with kitchen paper. Heat a large frying pan and when very hot, add the duck skin side down without oil. (If using wild duck you will need to add oil). Fry over a medium heat for 5 minutes until the skin becomes brown. Pour off any excess fat, turn over and cook for another 3 minutes until done.

6) Serve with the salsa, new potatoes and a medley of summer vegetables.

Sweet sensation

The most widely available type of wild duck is mallard. It has a delicious flavour and is in season from September to January/February. Like all other types of wild game it is low in fat. By contrast farmed duck—including Barbary—is available all year round and has a much higher fat content. Recipes generally adapt to farmed or wild duck, but remember that when cooking farmed birds you will need to remove fat during the cooking, whereas with wild duck you may need to add some. One bird will feed two to three people.



TIPS

- To roast wild duck cook for 45 minutes in a foil tent to maintain the moisture. Cook for 1 hour at 200°C/400°F/ Gas Mark 6.
- Put quarters of orange inside with a knob of butter and baste regularly with red wine, port or orange juice.
- If roasting farmed duck cook on a low rack so the fat drops through and can be discarded.

All year round flavour

Rabbit is widely available throughout the year, both farmed and wild. It is highly versatile and may be roasted, casseroled, curried, or made into pies and patés in the same way you would chicken. It is also low in fat.

Rabbit Cacciatore on tagliatelle

4 boneless rabbit leg portions
4 tbsp sunflower oil
Plain flour
Salt and pepper
150ml (5fl oz) white wine
1 onion
1 green pepper
1 carrot
1 stick celery
2 cloves garlic
400g (14oz) chopped tinned tomatoes
1/2 tsp sugar
350g (12oz) fresh tagliatelle
2 tbsp chopped parsley

- 1) Coat the rabbit pieces in the flour, seasoned with salt and pepper, brown in the heated oil on both sides, remove from the pan and set aside.
- 2) Pour in the white wine, bring to the boil and reduce by half.
- 3) Add the thinly sliced onion, green pepper, carrot, celery, chopped garlic, rabbit and tinned tomatoes.
- 4) Bring back to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Remove from the pan and keep warm.
- 5) Remove the rabbit, boil the sauce to reduce any excess liquid and season with sugar, salt and pepper. Meanwhile cook the tagliatelle in plenty of water.
- 6) Serve the pasta covered with the rabbit and its sauce, and sprinkled with chopped parsley.

TIPS

- Younger rabbit is preferable for roasting and should take around 40 minutes to an hour at 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.
- It is best to marinate overnight in wine, onion, garlic, lemon juice and olive oil though this is not essential.
- Cook covered and basted in the marinade or smeared with oil or butter.



Distinctive and delicious

Pigeon, despite being the smallest and cheapest of game birds, are absolutely delicious. They are available all year round but are at their best between May and October. They are sold both whole and as breast fillets, though as the breasts contain most of the meat many just buy the whole birds, cut out the breasts and discard the rest. One bird feeds one person only.

Pigeon and peach salad with hazelnut dressing

1tbsp hazelnut oil
8 pigeon breasts skinned
4 ripe peaches (nectarines or apricots)
Mixed salad leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
50g (1 3/4oz) roasted chopped hazelnuts

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE

2 tbsp hazelnut oil
4 tbsp sunflower oil
2 tbsp white wine vinegar

- 1) Heat the oil in the frying pan, and fry the seasoned pigeon breasts for 2 minutes on each side until slightly pink in the middle. Allow to cool.
- 2) Cut the peaches in half, stone, slice each half into six, and chop the hazelnuts.
- 3) Prepare the vinaigrette by whisking together the oils and vinegar and slice the cooked pigeon breasts lengthways.
- 4) Toss the salad leaves, pigeon slices and peaches in the vinaigrette and sprinkle with the nuts. Serve with warm French bread.

TIPS

- If you cut your pigeon breasts from the whole bird, use the rest of the carcase to make a game stock.
- Casseroling pigeon takes longer than you would expect. Try 1 1/2 to 2 hours.
- Grilling the breasts takes 5-10 minutes under a hot heat, smeared with butter, salt and pepper.
- For a good marinade for grilling or braising, try a mix of port, red wine, raisins, oil and fresh orange zest and juice.
- Roast young birds only on a high temperature, 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 for 35 minutes. Smear with butter, and cook in a foil tent until 10 minutes before the end, basting regularly.

