

Braised duck, venison stew — a hunter's feast

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CHEF MILOS CHIELKA'S GAME SPICE BLEND

1 cup ground black pepper
1/4 cup ground thyme
1/4 cup ground allspice
1/4 cup ground bay leaves
1/4 cup ground juniper berries
1/4 cup ground coriander
Combine all ingredients and mix well. Keep in a tightly closed container. This mixture can be used on all game birds and game meats.

BRAISED DUCK

1 duck (4-5 pounds) cut into serving pieces
4 cups flour for coating
2 tablespoons oil
1 cup chicken broth
1 1/2 cup dry white wine
1 bay leaf
2 onions, peeled and stuck with 3 cloves each

Coat duck pieces with flour. Heat oil in a large skillet and brown duck on all sides. Transfer duck to a casserole, add remaining ingredients, cover and bake 1 1/2 hours at 350 degrees.

GOLDEN ROAST GOOSE

1 goose (8-10 pounds)
3 cups cooked chopped chestnuts (peas can be used)

What wild game meat tastes like, how to cook it

• Acids tenderize large wild game meat. Deer, bear, moose and elk benefit from marinating in a vinaigrette, tomato sauce and/or Italian dressing mixture for at least 12 hours.

• Take care not to overcook venison. It has short fibers that toughen easily. Venison is best medium to medium-well done and should never be served rare or well done.

• Venison should be served hot as deer fat congeals when it cools. Use leftovers in stews or hash.

• If the ride home is long and somewhat warm, and your hanging game begins to get a "sticky" film inside, wash with a clean cloth soaked in vinegar.

• Beaver is dark, tender and tastes like roast pork.

• Muskrat tastes like turkey and is best when "corneled."

• Porcupines are vegetarians and will taste like the trees they eat (usually pine or aspen). Best parboiled.

• Rabbit tastes like chicken, and

if not careful when skinning, flying hair from the pelt will stick to all meat. Keep a dish towel soaking in hot water to remove pelt hair.

• Raccoon must be blotted immediately, and is best soaked in ice water with a little baking soda overnight. The meat is dark and sweet.

• Squirrel should also be soaked in ice water for several hours, and since it's not fatty at all, should be cooked slowly with plenty of moisture.

• Dove meat is dark and flavor-

ful and should be cooked slow with plenty of moisture because it has a tendency to be tough.

• Duck has a tendency to dry out during roasting so keep the skin on whenever cooking. Best when cooked on the rare side.

• Pheasant can be cooked like chicken and is all white meat. Baste frequently to keep from drying out during roasting.

• Wild turkeys can be treated the same as domestic birds.

Wash and pay dry venison. Place in a large non-metallic bowl and cover with bourbon, vegetables and seasonings, but not the jelly. Allow to marinate for at least 3 hours (longer or overnight, if possible). When ready to cook, remove meat and place in a covered roasting pan with the vegetables. Roast the venison for 2 1/2 hours at 350 degrees. Brush with a sauce made from the marinade, and the jelly mixed together. Internal venison temperature should read 170 degrees.

VENISON STEW

4 pounds venison chuck, cut into cubes
1/4 cup butter
6 onions, chopped
1-18 oz. can beef consommé
1/4 cup water or dry red wine
1 pound tomatoes, quartered
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons Chef Milos' Game spice

1 pound pearl onions
1 pound carrots, sliced
1 pound mushrooms, sliced

Dredge meat lightly with flour. Melt butter in a large Dutch oven or covered heavy casserole and add meat in batches with the onion and cook until brown. Reduce heat and mix in consommé, water, tomatoes, salt and seasonings. Cover and simmer 1 1/2 hours. Add onions, carrots and mushrooms and cover and continue simmering for an additional 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Sweet, wonderful port an exceptional treat

Port is big, round, full-bodied, sweet and wonderful. A glass of port accompanying dessert or served as the dessert course is an exceptional treat.

Vintage port is the greatest among ports, gets a great deal of hype, represents just 2 percent of the total annual production and is expensive. Not to worry, it is possible to enjoy good port on a regular basis, rather than just special occasions, once you learn that not all port is vintage and expensive.

Port is divided into two categories: wood port and vintage port. The former is aged in wood and the latter in the bottle. Vintage ports are produced only in excellent years, blessed with perfect weather conditions. These conditions occur an average of three times each decade.

THE DECISION to "declare" a vintage is made by the shipper with the approval of the Instituto do Vinho do Porto. Vintage port is always blended from wines of the best vineyards, grown in a single year of recognized quality, and has exceptional aroma and taste characteristics.



focus on wine
Eleanor and Ray Heald

Vintage port ages 2 to 2.5 years in cask; the remainder of its life is spent slowly aging in a black-glass bottle for at least 10 and frequently up to 30 years. Vintage port throws a heavy crust in the bottle and therefore must be set upright for 24 hours and carefully decanted before serving.

MOST CONSUMERS decide to buy port on Friday and open the bottle Saturday. This is exactly why it is important to learn something about wood ports, which are ready to drink when bought. There are no concerns about vintage, age, decanting or the like, and the price is much more reasonable.

Wood ports are divided by type into ruby, tawny (produced from red

grapes), and white. Fermentation is halted by addition of brandy, yielding a sweet wine with 19 to 20 percent alcohol. Young red port is a deep-purple color. It gradually turns ruby (red), then takes on brown hues and eventually becomes tawny (brown or dark amber). Port gains flavors and diminishes in body and color as it ages. It throws a crust in the cask rather than the bottle.

Tawny ports are lighter, more delicate and aromatic, and more expensive than ruby ports due to extended aging in cask. This aging produces a tawny color and a woody, nutty flavor. Better tawny ports have an average age stated on the label. The older wines develop a paler color, lighter body, and caramelized character that is particularly attractive.

VINTAGE-CHARACTER ports are fuller-bodied, mellow rubies, blended from wines of better-than-average years. They have some of the characteristics of vintage ports but have been aged in wood, rather than in the bottle, for four to five years. The increased quality of vintage character ports is dependent on the vineyard and year, rather than on age.

The difficulty for the consumer is identifying these wines on the merchant's shelf. Each shipper uses a "signature" name because this type of port is not strictly defined as is vintage port.

Late-bottled vintage ports are produced from a single, quality harvest, and must exhibit standards established by the IVP. They are asked in cask four to six years and thus have an aged quality compared to vintage ports because they mature faster in cask than in the bottle. These wines are much easier to identify because the label must say Late Bottled Vintage and include both the vintage year and the bottling date.



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WINE SELECTIONS OF THE WEEK

The following are quality examples and offer a good introduction to the various types of port. Taylor, Fladgate First Estate Port (1815) is a fruity ruby style crafted from traditional port grapes. With aroma of cherry, red plums and currants followed by jammy flavors, it will enhance any fresh fruit dessert accompanied by blue-velvet cheeses, particularly stilton.

DeLaforce "His Eminence's Choice" (1817) is a mature tawny port blended from aged reserve ports ranging six to 30 years old. The dried fruit and nutty character in both the aroma and flavor match it perfectly to a fruit compote dessert.

Quinta Do Noval's Neval Porto LB (1817) showcases classic vintage character with its rich blackberry and dark red fruit aromas. It is full bodied, generous, smooth, and rich with expressive port character in the finish.

Taylor, Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage Port 1985 (1815.50) is full, rich, viscous and loaded with cherry-berry fruit. A remarkable depth of flavors lasts through the substantial finish. This is dessert!

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