

Holiday Menu

Roast Duck with Peach Nectar Sauce

Whiskey Duck

Orange-Scented Sugar Snap Peas

Risotto with Exotic Mushrooms and Spinach

Cider-Roasted Acorn Squash

Southern Spoon Bread with Spiced Walnuts

Poached Pears in Raspberry Sauce



Wine: AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ LIKE PETER LEHMAN SHIRAZ

These rich, full-flavored dishes work best with a big, full-throttle Shiraz. The blackberry, plum and vanilla flavors of Australian Shiraz are a natural with these holiday classics.



Whiskey Duck

1/4 cup	whiskey or bourbon
2 tablespoons	honey
2 tablespoons	minced shallot or onion
2 cloves	garlic, minced
1 tablespoon	chopped fresh thyme
1 tablespoon	chopped fresh rosemary
6 (7.5 ounce)	Maple Leaf Farms Boneless Duck Breast Filets, thawed if frozen
1/2 teaspoon	salt
1/2 teaspoon	freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons	all purpose flour
1 cup	duck stock or chicken broth
To taste	salt and pepper

For marinade, in a small bowl, combine whiskey, honey, shallot, garlic, thyme and rosemary, mixing well. Place duck breasts in a resealable plastic bag; add marinade to bag. Seal bag; turn over several times to coat duck with marinade. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Remove duck from marinade, reserving marinade. Pat duck dry with a paper towel so honey from marinade will not burn. Score the skin of the duck breast taking care not to puncture the meat. Heat two large skillets over medium heat until hot. Place 3 duck breasts in each skillet skin sides down.* Sprinkle salt and pepper lightly over meaty sides of duck in skillets. Cook 8 to 9 minutes or until skin is crispy and golden brown. Turn duck; continue cooking 3 minutes. Transfer duck to a baking sheet, skin sides up. Bake 16 to 20 minutes or until internal temperature of duck reaches 155 degrees. Transfer duck to carving board; cover with foil and let stand 5 minutes. (Internal temperature of duck will rise to 165 degrees).

Carefully pour off all but 2 tablespoons drippings from skillets into a jar with a tight fitting lid. Refrigerate duck drippings for another use. Add flour to 2 tablespoons drippings in a skillet; cook over medium heat, stirring constantly 1 minute. Add duck stock and reserved marinade to skillet. Simmer gently 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Carve duck crosswise into thin slices; arrange on warmed serving plates. Spoon sauce over duck. Garnish with thyme or rosemary sprigs if desired. Makes 6 servings.

**Or, cook in two batches in the same skillet pouring off and reserving drippings after cooking the first batch.*

Risotto with Exotic Mushrooms and Spinach

4 cups	duck stock or reduced sodium chicken broth
2 tablespoons	butter
2 (4 ounce)	packages sliced exotic mushrooms such as oyster, shiitake or crimini
1/2 cup	chopped shallots or sweet onion
1 1/2 cups	arborio or short grained rice
1/2 cup	dry white wine or dry vermouth
6 ounces	baby spinach leaves (4 cups packed)
	Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup	freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Place stock or broth in a medium saucepan; bring to a simmer over high heat. Reduce heat; keep stock at a gentle simmer.

Melt butter in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and shallots; cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in rice; cook 1 minute. Add wine; cook until wine is absorbed. Add 1 cup broth mixture to skillet. Simmer, stirring frequently, until broth is absorbed. Continue to add broth 1/2 cup at a time, keeping rice mixture at a constant simmer and stirring frequently. Repeat until rice is tender and mixture has a creamy consistency, about 18 minutes. (If necessary, after all of the broth is absorbed add small amounts of hot water until rice is tender).

Stir in spinach 1 cup at a time just until wilted. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in half of cheese. Transfer to serving plates; top with remaining cheese. Makes 6 servings.

Orange Scented Sugar Snap Peas

1-1/2 pounds	sugar snap peas
1/4 cup	butter
1 teaspoon	salt
1/2 teaspoon	freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons	finely shredded orange peel

In a large saucepan, cover sugar snap peas with cold water. Bring to a simmer over high heat. Reduce heat; simmer until crisp-tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Drain well and return to same pan. Add butter, salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat until butter melts, stirring frequently. Transfer to a serving bowl; top with orange peel. Makes 6 servings.

Poached Pears in Raspberry Sauce

1 (750ml)	bottle reisling, rhine or other sweet white wine
6 large	firm Bosc or Comice pears
3 or 4	cinnamon sticks
5 or 6	whole cloves
2 (10 ounce)	packages frozen raspberries in syrup, thawed
2 tablespoons	brown sugar
2 teaspoons	cornstarch
1/2 cup	semi sweet chocolate chips (optional)
	Mint sprigs (optional)

Pour wine into a large saucepan. Use an apple corer or small sharp knife to core pears from the bottom up removing seeds. Peel pears leaving stems in tact. As they are peeled, immediately transfer to the saucepan and coat with wine to prevent discoloration. Add cinnamon sticks and cloves. Add enough water to saucepan to barely cover pears. Bring to a simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer pears, turning over occasionally, until tender when pierced with a sharp knife, 15 to 20 minutes depending on ripeness of pears.

Meanwhile, puree raspberries in a food processor; press mixture through a strainer and discard seeds. Combine puree and brown sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes. Combine cornstarch with 1 tablespoon cold water, mixing well. Continue to simmer 5 minutes or until sauce thickens, stirring frequently. Transfer to a pitcher or measuring cup; cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Use a slotted spoon to transfer pears to a plate. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Pears may be refrigerated up to 24 hours before serving. Serve chilled or let stand at room temperature 30 minutes before serving.

To serve, pour raspberry sauce onto 6 dessert plates. Top each with a pear. If desired, place chocolate chips in a small freezer bag; seal bag. Microwave at high power for 30 second intervals until chocolate is melted. Cut off a tiny end of bag; drizzle chocolate decoratively over pear and sauce. Garnish with mint sprigs if desired. Makes 6 servings.

Cider Roasted Acorn Squash

3 small	acorn squash, 2 1/2 to 2 3/4 pounds total
1 cup	apple cider or apple juice
1/4 cup	packed light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon	cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon	salt
1/8 teaspoon	ground cloves
2 tablespoons	butter, melted
	Pomegranate seeds (optional)

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Cut squash crosswise in half. Scoop out and discard seeds. Pour apple cider into a 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Place squash halves cut sides down in dish, over lapping if necessary. Bake uncovered 45 to 55 minutes or until squash is tender when pierced with a sharp knife.

Remove baking dish from oven. Turn squash cut sides up. Combine brown sugar, cinnamon, salt and cloves; sprinkle over squash. Brush butter over squash. Return to oven; bake 5 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter or plates. If there is any cider remaining in dish, drizzle over squash. Garnish with pomegranate seeds if desired. Makes 6 servings.

Roast Duck with Peach Nectar Sauce

3 (12 ounce) Maple Leaf Farms fully cooked Rotisserie Duck Halves, thawed if frozen
1 tablespoon rendered duck fat or butter
1/2 cup chopped sweet onion or shallots
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 (11.5 ounce) can peach nectar
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 tablespoons catsup or chili sauce
1/4 teaspoon crushed hot red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon coldwater

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Remove duck halves from packaging and place in a shallow roasting pan. Bake 25 minutes or until heated through.

Meanwhile, heat duck fat in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add nectar, brown sugar, vinegar, catsup and pepper flakes; bring to a simmer. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered 10 minutes. Combine cornstarch with 1 tablespoon cold water; mix well. Add to sauce; continue simmering 2 minutes, stirring frequently.

Divide each duck half into two portions; transfer to serving plates and top with sauce. Makes 6 servings.

Southern Spoon Bread with Spiced Walnuts

For spiced walnuts:

1 large egg white
1 cup large walnut pieces
1/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

For spoon bread:

2 cups cold water
1 cup yellow cornmeal
3/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces
1 cup whole or 2% milk
3 large eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon baking soda

For spiced walnuts: Heat oven to 300 degrees. In a small bowl, beat egg white with a fork until frothy. Add walnuts and toss to coat. In a medium bowl, combine sugar, cinnamon, salt, cloves and nutmeg; mix well. Remove walnuts from egg whites and add to sugar mixture. Toss to coat well with sugar mixture. Arrange in a single layer on a foil-lined baking or cookie sheet. Bake 30 minutes or until golden brown. Immediately transfer walnuts to a sheet of waxed paper; let stand until cool. (Walnuts may be prepared up to 48 hours before serving. Store tightly covered at room temperature.)

For spoon bread: Heat oven to 425 degrees. Place water in a heavy medium saucepan. Gradually whisk in cornmeal and salt. Place over high heat; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes, whisking occasionally. (Mixture will be thick.) Remove from heat; whisk in butter until melted. Gradually whisk in milk, then eggs and baking soda.

Pour mixture into a buttered 1-1/2 quart soufflé dish or round casserole dish. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. (Center will be creamy). Spoon onto serving plates; top with walnuts. Makes 6 servings.