

My Favorite Duck Breast Recipe—Tried & True Recipes

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Serves: 2 | Cook time: 1 hour 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Seared duck breast:

- 1 duck breast, about 1 pound
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mushrooms and pearl onions:

- 8 ounces gold or white pearl onions
- 12 ounces cremini mushrooms trimmed and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons reserved duck fat
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 4 garlic cloves peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon freshly minced parsley, plus more for garnish
- Salt and pepper to taste

Sweet potato puree:

- 2 sweet potatoes, about 1 pound, peeled and cubed
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup whole milk plus more, if needed
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons Aleppo pepper flakes or paprika and a pinch of crushed red pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Parboil and peel the pearl onions:

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add the pearl onions (skins on) and boil for 5 minutes. Transfer the onions to a bowl of ice-cold water using a slotted spoon.
2. Once the onions are cool enough to handle, carefully cut off the root end of the onion with sharp scissors. Pop the onion out from its skin. Continue until all the onions are peeled. Discard the skins.

Cook the sweet potatoes:

1. Dump out the water from the pot and add the sweet potatoes. Cover with fresh water and bring to a boil. Boil for 15-20 minutes until fork-tender.
2. Turn off the heat. Pour the potatoes into a colander and return the pot to the same burner. Allow the potatoes to dry off for 1 minute using the residual heat from the warm burner.
3. Add the butter, milk, sour cream, garlic powder, and pepper flakes to the potatoes.
4. Using an immersion blender, blend until creamy and smooth, adding more milk if needed. Taste and season with salt, pepper, garlic powder or pepper flakes. Set aside and keep warm.

Cook the duck:

1. Pat the duck breast dry. Using a sharp paring knife, score the skin at an angle in $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch increments until the skin has been completely scored from edge to edge. Be careful not to pierce or cut into the flesh of the duck.
2. Place the duck, skin-side down, into a skillet. Turn the heat to medium and cook for 7 minutes or until the fat begins to render out. Adjust the heat periodically as it cooks. You want to stay somewhere between medium and medium-low.
3. If your duck breast is unevenly fatty (for example, the ends may have a thicker fat layer than the middle of the breast), use a small cast-iron press or skillet or a metal flipper to press that part of the duck into the skillet to encourage even browning.
4. After 7 minutes, get the heat back to medium or just slightly above. The fat in the skillet may begin bubbling and sputtering a bit more rapidly. Check the skin and continue frying and adjusting the heat until the skin is deep golden brown and crisp. This may take another 6-8 minutes. Just keep adjusting the heat and peeking at the skin.
5. Flip the duck and turn the heat to medium. Cook for 5-10 minutes or until desired internal temperature is met. For medium-rare, cook the duck to about 130°F at the thickest part of the breast. Note: Do not take the temperature of the duck through the skin. Pierce the flesh to get an accurate temperature read. I prefer to cook the duck until it reaches 135°F.
6. Transfer the duck to a plate and cover it tightly with foil. Set aside to rest as you finish the rest of the recipe.

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Fry the mushrooms and onions:

1. Drain all the duck fat into a heat-proof jar through a small sieve. Next, wipe out the skillet and place it on the stove over medium heat.
2. Once hot, add the mushrooms and cook for 5 minutes until the mushrooms begin to sweat and take on a bit of color.
3. Add 2 tablespoons of reserved duck fat, pearl onions, and thyme sprigs. Season with salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat for 10 minutes until the pearl onions are fork-tender and golden around the edges.
4. Stir in the minced garlic and fresh parsley and sauté for 1 minute. Turn off the heat.

To serve:

1. Right before serving, remove the foil from the duck and slice it crosswise.
2. Spoon the sweet potatoes into a rimmed plate and pile on the mushrooms and onions. Arrange a few slices of duck on each plate. Garnish with more parsley and Aleppo pepper flakes if you like. Enjoy!