

Sautéed Duck Breasts

Ingredients

- Duck breasts
- Nutmeg
- Salt
- Pepper
- 2 thyme sprigs per breast
- 2 bay leaves per breast

Preparation

1. Trim any excess fat and skin from the duck breasts, but leave $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of skin overhanging the meat, as it will shrink during cooking
2. Trim away and discard any silver skin
3. The duck breasts should be cold before scoring the skin; if they are not, place them in the refrigerator until the fat is firm, using a sharp knife, score the skin diagonally in a crosshatch pattern, making cuts about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart and deep enough to cut through the fat without cutting into the meat
4. Sprinkle the skin generously with salt and a fine grating of nutmeg
5. Turn the breasts over and season the meat side lightly with salt and pepper
6. Place the breasts on a plate and top each piece with 2 thyme sprigs and 2 bay leaves
7. Cover and refrigerate for 6-12 hours
8. Remove the duck from the refrigerator and allow it to stand for about 15 minutes
9. Discard the thyme and bay leaves and dry the duck well with paper towels
10. Heat a film of canola oil in two medium skillets over medium heat, add the breasts skin side down (cook them slowly enough for the fat to render without the skin browning too quickly, adjusting the heat as necessary)
11. As the fat renders, drain it from time to time, tilt the skillets and drain the fat into a container, either by scooping it up with a spoon or by holding the breasts in place with a large metal spatula as you pour off the fat (drain off about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fat from each skillet)
12. After about 15 minutes, when the duck is just under medium rare, turn over the breasts and cook for a couple of minutes
13. Remove from the skillets and allow to rest for 5-10 minutes

