

Roast Aylesbury duck with bacon and potatoes

I'm using Maris Piper potatoes that will soak up some of the duck fat as the bird roasts in the oven – all very rich. My accompanying peas with mint and lemon will cut the opulence and richness. I'll hang onto any remaining duck fat and do my roasties on Christmas day with.

Aylesbury duck, 2-3kg
6 large potatoes
2 medium Spanish onions
200g streaky bacon cut into 1cm cubes
Olive oil
Thyme and bay
Malden salt
250ml Amontilado sherry

Preheat the oven to 200°C. If the duck comes with giblets, I'll hang onto the liver and heart seasoned quickly flash-fried in a drizzle of olive oil with garlic and lardons – they're pretty gorgeous served as a warm salad with dressed leaves – maybe a few orange segments.

Peel the potatoes and cut them into wedges – like big chunky chips, dropping them into cold water as you go.

Put the bacon bits – use pancetta if you can lay your hand on any – into a large heavy casserole or roasting tin, drizzle with olive oil, then over a very low heat cook them – I'm trying to flavour the oil with bacon.

Drain and pat dry the potato wedges, and cook them slowly in the bacon fat.

Peel a couple of Spanish onions, cut them into big chunks – into the bacon fat with the potatoes. Season, add a bay and some thyme leaves.

Prick the duck all over with a fork. Season it inside and out, lay it over the spuds and put the roasting tin in the oven for an hour and a half.

Occasionally turn and baste the onion and potatoes, during the cooking carefully tip off most of the fat that is pouring out of the duck and this is not being absorbed by the potatoes.

Test the duck to see if it's done – no sign of blood and the juices running clear. The skin should be crisp and singing.

Remove the potatoes and onions and reserve them on a warm plate. Turn up the oven to full volume and return the duck for a further 5 minutes to really crisp it up. Then rest it on a warmed plate.

Put the roasting tin on the hob, add the sherry and whisk any bits stuck to the bottom of the tin into the boozy gravy.

Joint up the duck and serve. You'll get 2 generous portions or 4 tight portions from a 3kg Aylesbury duck.

Peas, lemon and mint

300g frozen peas

Juice and zest from 1 lemon

Drizzle olive oil

Good handful fresh mint leaves

Malden salt, freshly ground black pepper

Simmer the peas in a centimetre of boiling water, for 2 minutes, drain off the water and add the zest juice and mint, return to the hob, drizzle with oil, season and eat with the duck.