



duck demystified

Our riff on a classic duck a l'orange shows opportunities to spur trial via familiar, safe starter presentations

By Daniel Bendas and Dean Small

the original

Our inspiration was the duck confit a l'orange with Grand Marnier French toast, orange segments and frisée from one sixtyblue in Chicago (pictured above, \$9, recipe, p. 95). Executive Chef Martial Noguier, the same chef credited with resurrecting the Windy City's venerable Pump Room a few years ago, has done a great job of updating the classic duck a l'orange entrée with an appetizer presentation that's fresh and fun.

We particularly like the use of the brioche French toast as the foundation for the dish. The challenge is how to adapt this concept for a broader, more midscale audience that has had limited exposure to duck.

the analysis

As the dining public becomes more adventuresome, the time is ripe to put duck on the menu. Still, this project presents obstacles both for the kitchen and the customer. First, prep might be a challenge because of the cook time and the raw ingredients many restaurants will not have in their inventory. To accommodate, we took advantage of value-added products that offer consistent quality without the prep issues. The second challenge is helping customers overcome their misconceptions that duck has a gamy, strong flavor or is high in fat. One of the best ways of doing this is to encourage trial through an appetizer that is high-impact for the operator, but low-risk for the consumer.

the results

The fruit component of duck a l'orange is an ideal bridge to creating dishes that offer familiar, comfortable flavors that will delight customers.

Oranges, dried cherries and cranberries are all recognizable flavors that allow a dish to be simultaneously experimental and "safe."

We also built the recipes around two of the most popular ethnic trends in dining: Mexican/Southwestern and Asian. By casting these dishes as starters, the recipes give restaurants a chance to still drive innovation and at the same time allow their guests to feel safe trying a new product without risking their entire dining experience. ❖

Duck carnitas chile relleno with red chile orange mojo and Peppadew corn salsa

Yield: 8 servings

FOR THE RED CHILE ORANGE MOJO

Yield: 2 C

Garlic	2 Oz
Papaya, peeled, seeded	1 1/2 Lb
Orange juice, freshly squeezed	1 1/2 C
Salt	1 tsp
Cayenne	1/2 tsp

1. In a food processor, fully chop the garlic. Add remaining ingredients and purée until a smooth, uniform consistency is achieved.

FOR THE DUCK FILLING

Yield: 2 Lb

Olive oil	2 Oz
Onion, fire-roasted, 3/8-inch dice	2 Oz
Red bell peppers, fire-roasted, 3/8-inch dice	2 Oz
Yellow bell peppers, fire-roasted, 3/8-inch dice	2 Oz
Chayote squash, 3/8-inch dice	3 Oz
Shiitake mushrooms, 3/8-inch dice	2 Oz
Garlic, chopped	1 Oz plus 1 TBS
Duck confit, roughly chopped	8 Oz
Apricots, dried, 1/4-inch dice	5 Oz
Golden raisins	1 1/2 Oz
Pine nuts, toasted	1/4 C
Arugula	2 Oz
Cayenne	1/8 tsp
Salt	1 tsp
Freshly ground black pepper	1/4 tsp

Jalapeño Jack cheese, shredded 8 Oz

1. Heat oil in a large sauté pan and sauté onions, peppers and squash over medium heat until tender, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and garlic and sauté for 2 additional minutes.

2. Stir in the duck, apricots and raisins and sauté for 2 minutes.

3. Add the pine nuts, arugula and seasoning and blend well to incorporate all the ingredients and lightly wilt the arugula.

4. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Fold in the cheese.

FOR THE CORN SALSA

Yield: 1 1/4 Lb

Corn kernels	1 Lb
Peppadew peppers, julienned (see note)	4 Oz
Yellow onion, 1/4-inch dice	2 Oz
Serrano chile, minced	1 TBS
Dried Mexican oregano leaves, crumbled	1/8 tsp
Garlic, granulated	1/4 tsp
Salt	1/4 tsp
Orange juice	1 TBS

1. Combine. Reserve, covered, refrigerated.

Note: Peppadew peppers, available ready-to-use, are bright red with a sweet-hot flavor.

FOR THE CHIPOTLE SOUR CREAM

Yield: 1 C

Sour cream	1 C
Chipotle powder	2 tsp

1. Combine. Reserve, covered, refrigerated.

FOR THE CHILE RELLENO

Poblano chiles, fire-roasted, skin removed	8 each
Duck filling	2 Lb
Jalapeño Jack cheese, shredded	8 Oz
Peppadew corn salsa	12 Oz
Red chile orange mojo	2 C
Chipotle sour cream	1/2 C
Cilantro sprigs	8 each

1. Cut a slit 3/4 of the way down the poblano chile and remove the seed sack, leaving the stem in place. Place 4 ounces of filling into chile. Top each stuffed chile with 1 ounce of shredded Jalapeño Jack cheese.

2. Bake the chiles in a 400 degree F oven until stuffing reaches 160 degrees F and cheese is melted, about 6 to 8 minutes.

TO SERVE

Spoon 2 ounces of red chile orange mojo in the center of each plate. Top with the hot chile relleno. Surround each chile relleno with two ounces of corn salsa. Using a squeeze bottle, squeeze 1 1/2 tablespoons of chipotle sour cream over each chile relleno. Garnish plate with cilantro sprigs; serve immediately.

Menu price: \$7.50-\$7.75; food cost/serving: 28%-30%



* Mexican, Nuevo Latino and Southwestern items continue to grow in popularity. People understand what a relleno is, so we're building off of something that is already familiar and fun.

* The filling for the relleno uses a prepared duck confit. Although the operator could prepare this, many kitchens don't have the time, equipment or expertise to do so. Several duck companies now offer high-quality products.

* Familiar and popular fruit flavors—orange, papaya, raisin and apricot—help balance the heat from the poblano peppers, cayenne and Jalapeño Jack cheese.

Bendas and Small are partners in Synergy Consulting Group, a Calif.-based firm offering menu development and operations training to foodservice manufacturers and operators.

* The sauces, stuffings, etc., are all prepared in advance, allowing the final dish to be finished on the line to execute consistently and within reasonable ticket times.

* Fire-roasting adds flavor depth to the onions and yellow and red peppers.

Sizzling Peking duck salad

Yield: 4 servings

FOR THE HONEY HOISIN DRESSING

Yield: 3 1/4 C

Garlic	1 Oz
Fresh ginger	1 Oz
Rice vinegar	1 C
Peanut oil	1/2 C
Honey	1/2 C
Hoisin sauce	1/2 C
Mirin (rice wine)	2 TBS
Soy sauce, low sodium	2 TBS
Sesame oil	1/2 tsp
Chile garlic sauce	1 tsp
Cilantro leaves	1/2 Oz

1. Finely chop the garlic and ginger in a food processor. Slowly add the remaining ingredients and blend well. Reserve.

FOR THE HONEY HOISIN GLAZE

Yield: 1/2 C

Hoisin sauce	1/4 C
Honey hoisin dressing	1/4 C

1. Combine ingredients in a small bowl and mix thoroughly. Reserve.

FOR THE SALAD

Yield: 1 Lb

Arugula	8 Oz
Romaine lettuce, chopped	8 Oz

1. Wash and thoroughly drain lettuce leaves, removing any discolored greens. Reserve.

FOR THE ASIAN SPICED PECANS

Yield: 10 Oz

Pecans	8 Oz
Brown sugar	3 Oz
Cayenne	1 1/2 tsp
Granulated garlic	1/2 tsp
Sesame oil	1 TBS
Honey	1 TBS
Red chile garlic sauce	2 tsp

1. Combine all ingredients, except pecans, in a stainless steel bowl and mix well to form a smooth paste. Add the pecans and thoroughly coat. Place coated nuts on a sheet pan in a 300 degree F oven. Stir every five minutes until the pecans are candied, about 10 to 12 minutes. Separate large clusters of nuts that are stuck together. Reserve to cool.

FOR THE VEGETABLE MIXTURE

Peanut oil	1 Oz
Red bell peppers, julienned	8 Oz
Yellow bell peppers, julienned	2 Oz
Red onion, cored, julienned	4 Oz
Zucchini, bias-cut	2 Oz
Shiitake mushrooms, sliced	2 Oz
Snow peas, blanched	4 Oz
Carrots, bias-cut, blanched	3 Oz
Asparagus, bias-cut, blanched	3 Oz

1. Heat peanut oil in a large sauté pan and stir-fry the peppers, onion, zucchini and shiitake mushrooms until tender. Add the remaining vegetables and toss well to incorporate. Reserve, covered, refrigerated.

FOR THE SIZZLING PEKING DUCK SALAD

Duck breast, cooked, skinned	1 each
Honey hoisin glaze	2 TBS
Salad greens, prepared	4 Oz
Honey hoisin dressing	1 Oz
Plum, ripe, sliced into eighths	1 each
Mandarin orange segments	8 each
Asian spiced pecans	3/4 Oz
Won ton strips, crisp	1/2 Oz
Green onions, bias-cut	2 TBS
Vegetable mixture	7 Oz
Honey hoisin dressing	1 Oz

1. Brush both sides of duck breast with honey hoisin glaze and place in oven or under cheese melter to reheat and lightly caramelize the glaze.

2. Toss salad greens with dressing and place greens on plate. Place the plum and Mandarin oranges around the edges of the salad. Sprinkle the pecans around the plate. Top salad with won tons and green onions.

3. At time of service, place the cold vegetables onto a very hot sizzle skillet and gently toss to re-heat. Slice the glazed Peking duck breast on the bias, achieving 7 to 8 slices, and carefully layer it over the vegetables.

4. Ladle 1 ounce of the honey hoisin dressing over the vegetables, creating the sizzle, and serve immediately with the salad.

Note: At the time of service, the chef recommends the server place the duck and vegetables over the salad. Serve with chop sticks.

*Menu price: \$7.50-\$7.75;
food cost/serving: 28%*

* The fully cooked duck breast offers consistent product quality and helps the operator avoid prep or byproduct issues with an unfamiliar product. Chefs can also marinate and pan-sear their own duck breast.

* Operationally, the salad is not complicated for the kitchen or the server. Beyond using duck versus chicken, it is very similar to what most casual-theme restaurants are doing today, but at a slightly more innovative level.

* The “sizzle” at serving adds an element of entertainment at the table and offers a fun interaction with the server. It’s also an enticement to trial because the menu copy sounds exciting.



* Mandarin oranges and plums give a fresh, sweet, fruit flavor to complement the duck’s honey hoisin glaze.

* Asian spiced pecans add crunch and a fresh variation on the blanched almonds typically served on Asian salads. Brown sugar, cayenne and red chile garlic sauce give a sweet-hot sensation that is popular in many contemporary dishes.