

Pato con Higos (Braised Duck with Figs in an Orange Sherry Sauce)

Start preparation 2 hours ahead, by soaking dried figs in water.

Serves 4

6 oz. small, dried figs, stemmed but whole (14 figs)

Zest (minced) and juice of 1 large orange
(about 1 cup of juice)

Pinch of ground cinnamon

3/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

3/4 tablespoons butter

4 large duck breasts (leave skin on)

3 tablespoons fine Spanish brandy

1 cup dry *amontillado* or *oloroso* Spanish sherry

1 cup home-made veal or chicken stock

As a garnish: 3 sections of a fresh orange, without membrane, per person (about 1 orange)

To prep the figs: In a bowl, cover figs with 1/2 cup boiling water and soak for at least 2 hours. Reserve figs and liquid.

To prepare the sauce: In the blender, purée 2 figs (1 for each 2 people) with the orange zest and juice, cinnamon, and 1/2 teaspoon each salt & pepper. Reserve.

To cook the duck: Pat dry duck breasts; season each of them with remaining salt & pepper. In a large skillet, heat butter and add breasts, skin side down; pour brandy over and flambé. Keeping heat high, brown duck breasts to give them a nice color; continue cooking for a few minutes, but make sure the meat is still quite rare. Set duck breasts aside and keep them warm.

To assemble the dish: Defat skillet and deglaze skillet with sherry. Add veal stock, reserved sauce, reserved figs and their soaking liquid. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium and cook, uncovered, for about 20-25 minutes or until reduced to about 3/4 cups of liquid. Remove figs and keep them warm, together with the duck. Strain liquid through a fine-mesh strainer back in the pan. Taste for seasoning.

To serve: Slice duck breasts diagonally (like a *magret*). Plate on individual dishes, pouring some sauce on each and the duck breast on top, skin side up. Arrange the orange sections on the side of the duck.

Wine Pairing:
Marimar Estate Cristina Pinot Noir

Recipe from:
The Catalan Country Kitchen, page 78
by Marimar Torres