

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

Duck Breast Salad

BY RACHEL WALKER



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☛ THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS of building a summer salad. Some might begin by picking a seasonal ingredient, others might find inspiration from the reduced aisle in the supermarket, or the green fingered among us could see what leaves have sprouted in the garden.

This recipe started with the excitement of discovering enormous duck breasts for £2.50 in the butchers. The duck season allows wild breeds such as teal, mallard and widgeon to be shot from September 1 to January 31, but the increase of farmed duck ensures reasonably-priced meat from varieties like Gressingham or Barbary all year round.

Serves 2

- 1 red chicory
- 1 orange
- 40g lamb's lettuce
- 40g walnut halves
- 75g green beans
- 1 duck breast
- 1tbsp cracked black pepper
- salt

Dressing

- 3tbsps olive oil
- 1tbsp red-wine vinegar
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 1tsp flat leaf parsley, finely sliced

1. Preheat the oven to 180C.
2. Next, prepare the salad. Cut the red chicory at the base and tear away the leaves. Cut off the top and bottom of the orange, use a knife to slice away the peel and then cut between the membrane to divide it into segments.
3. Put the red chicory, lamb's lettuce, orange segments and walnut halves in a salad bowl.
4. Top and tail the green beans and cut into two-inch pieces. Blanche in boiling water and then chill by running them under cold water. Add the green beans to the salad bowl.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM & ZOE HILL



5. Shake the olive oil, red-wine vinegar, shallot and parsley in a jam jar—and add any residual orange juice left from preparing the orange (a tablespoon or so of liquid can be squeezed from the membrane). Pour the dressing over the salad, toss to coat everything and then divide between two plates.
6. Season the duck with salt and press the cracked black pepper into the fatty skin side.
7. Heat a frying pan or skillet that can go inside the oven. There's no need to add any butter or oil—when you put in the duck skin-side down, it leaches out its own fat. Reduce the heat and cook for five minutes until the skin turns golden and crisp, then move the pan to the oven and cook the duck breast for three more minutes on each side.
8. Let the duck breast rest for five minutes. Then thinly slice and serve on top of the two salads.

TRY THIS...

The flavours in this salad and dressing also go perfectly with beef. For a red meat alternative, quickly pan-fry onglet or hanger steak, slice into thin strips and serve as you would the duck.

Sink Some Sangria

THE ORANGE IN THIS MONTH'S RECIPE led me into sangria territory for the paired drink. In its purest form, the chilled wine punch can be a refreshing and elegant drink. All too often, though, it's laced with a medley of spirits, sugar syrups and whole fruit salad. After a little experimentation, I settled on a simple trio: red wine, brandy and orangeade.

Sangria recipes often involve macerating the fruit, but this really isn't necessary. The only rule I would stick to is avoiding the temptation of days-old wine. Sure, there's no point using something top-notch, but sangria shouldn't be an excuse to use the dregs. So chill something sensible, pick a safe selection of fruits and give sangria a second chance.



■ **Toro Loco Tempranillo**,

Aldi, £3.79/bottle

■ **Simply Garnacha**, Tesco,
£4.79/bottle

■ **Aromatic and Citrus Spanish White Wine**,
Waitrose, £4.99/bottle

Recipe

- 15–20 large ice cubes
- 1 bottle of chilled wine
- 660ml chilled mixer (orangeade or lemonade, see below for tips)
- 50ml of brandy (optional)
- 1–2 oranges, thinly sliced in circles

1. Half fill a pitcher with ice.
2. Pour in half the bottle of wine and one can of mixer to start with.
3. Stir in the brandy and orange slices, and add equal amounts of wine and mixer until full. As it's drunk, refill the jug in the same fashion.



MAXIMISING THE MIXER

- A big percentage of sangria is made up of the mixer, so don't scrimp. Fever-Tree's Sicilian Lemonade and Marks and Spencer's pink cranberry lemonade all add flavour and fizz.
- Large ice cubes are key to a good sangria; they chill the punch instead of diluting it. Try Nisbets' big ice cube tray (nisbets.co.uk).
- If you're catering for a big gathering, then don't shy away from bag-in-box wines as a cost-efficient option.



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pudding
of the
Month



Easy Eton Mess

There are several tales about how this delicious pudding came about. But regardless of its origins, it's served every June at the oldest ongoing school sporting fixture—the Eton versus Harrow cricket match. It's also light, summery and easy to prepare.

Serves 4

- 4 ready-made meringue nests
- 300ml double cream
- 2tbsps Greek yogurt
- 250g raspberries and/or strawberries, washed and hulled.

1. Use your hands to break up the meringue nests.
2. Whisk the double cream into soft peaks and then stir in the Greek yogurt.
3. Fold in the raspberries/strawberries and the chunks of meringue until combined. ■

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BOOK



Preserves, Pickles and Cures: Recipes for the Modern Kitchen Larder by Thane Prince, Amazon, £16.99.

BARGAIN



Carafe with cork stopper, Ikea, £4. Add cucumber or lemon slices to chilled water for a restaurant feel.

BLOW-OUT



The Smart Scoop, Sage, by Heston Blumenthal, John Lewis, £395.95. Make your own ice-cold summer treats.