

Joe Jur giel ewicz & Son, Lt d. Duck Far m Newsl et t er

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The Pekin Duck From China to America



At the base of the Yangtze River

Basin sits the city of Nanjing. Along the many canals that link



to the major waterways are many types of fowl including the Chinese Mallard duck. Nanjing first became the capital of China in 229 BC. In the following years leading up to the Liang Dynasty, the Chinese capital was moved to Beijing. With this move barge traffic increased on the waterways spilling grain into the canals.



The Mallard ducks fed off this grain causing an increase in their size and

their feathers began turning white. By the early 10th century Chinese farmers capitalized on this "new species" and domesticated the Pekin Duck.

By the latter part of the Ming Dynasty the Peking Duck was one of the more popular dishes in the imperial court.

In 1873, Ed McGrath, a New York merchant, saw the Pekin duck during his visit in China. Upon observing this duck, his first thought was "It is a goose". After learning the fowl was indeed a duck and not a goose he sought the services of James Palmer to ship 25 ducks to America. By the time the ship landed in Long Island only 9 of the Pekin ducks survived. However, the humid climate of Long Island was suitable for the ducks and they began to thrive. With an average of 150 eggs per year being laid, they began to multiply.



Duck farms began to spring up in Long Island, and breeding of the Pekin duck began in the United States.

Recipe of the Month

Duck Confit is an impressive and memorable dish you can prepare for your dinner guests.

Ingredients for a Memorable Duck Confit

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons salt
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 3-4 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 shallot, peeled and sliced
- 5-6 sprigs rosemary
- Coarse ground black pepper

One - Two Days Before Serving

Find a dish or container large enough to hold the duck pieces when arranged in one layer. Sprinkle the tablespoon of salt on the bottom of the dish. Then add to the bottom of the container one half of the garlic, shallots, and rosemary. Arrange the duck pieces with the skin facing upwards, then cover with the remaining salt, garlic, shallots, and rosemary. Sprinkle with a bit of pepper. Cover and refrigerate for 1-2 days.

Two - Three Hours Before Serving

Preheat your oven to 225°F. In a small saucepan, melt the duck fat. Lightly brush the seasonings from the duck pieces. Tightly arrange the duck pieces in one layer in a high-sided baking dish or ovenproof saucepan. Pour the melted fat onto the duck so that the pieces are completely covered, and place in the oven.

Cook the confit at a very slow simmer until the duck is moist and tender, and can be easily removed from the bone. This will take approximately 2-3 hours. When this state is reached, remove the duck from the oven. Cool and store the confit in the fat. This will keep several weeks if refrigerated. and the last drops of juice from the vent are pale rose. If the bird is well done, these juices will be a pale yellow color.

Chef's Tip: A fatter duck is a must when preparing a flavorful Duck Confit. To have a great tasting bird, you need a specifically balanced ratio of fat-to-meat. Too much fat and the meat is greasy. Too little fat and the meat is bland and dry. Make sure you find a well-balanced duck leg for your Confit.

Joe Jurgielewicz & Son is your Duck Confit Ingredient Resource. Check out *Gourmet Secrets* under the "Consumer" page for more information.

Fun Fact:

Pekin or Peking?

Pekin Duck is a species of domesticated duck used for eggs and meat.

Peking Duck is a famous duck dish from Beijing that has been prepared since the imperial era, and is now considered one of China's national foods.