

Duck Breast With Pomegranate Sauce

1 one-pound duck breast	2 teaspoons tomato paste
1 large pomegranate	1 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme
¼ cup Madeira, sherry, or red wine	1 teaspoon crushed peppercorns
½ cup beef broth	1 teaspoon salt

Crush the peppercorns, and combine with the thyme, and the salt. Prick the duck breast fat all over the with a sharp-pronged fork. Dry on a paper towel. Rub the dry marinade of thyme, pepper, and salt all over the duck breast. Wrap in plastic, and let marinate in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight.

Remove the seeds from the pomegranate. Squeeze about $\frac{7}{8}$ of the seeds in a ricer or some other press to extract about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of juice. Alternatively, you can use bottled pomegranate juice. Set the remaining $\frac{1}{8}$ amount of seeds aside. Bring the beef broth to a boil in a small sauce pan, dissolve the tomato paste in it. Set aside off the heat.

Preheat the oven to 300°. Film a shallow, oven-proof casserole with olive oil, and heat on top of the stove until very hot. Place the duck breast skin-side down in the casserole, and immediately turn down the heat to medium. Sauté for 13-15 minutes until the fat is nicely browned. Turn the breast and sauté the flesh side just until seared, about 3-4 minutes. Drain all the fat from the pan.

Place the duck back in its casserole, skin side down, and set in the oven for 10 minutes. Take out of the oven, and remove the duck from the casserole, keeping it warm while you prepare the sauce. Do not drain any fat that has accumulated in the pan.

Heat the casserole on top of the stove over high heat, and add the Madeira or wine, scraping up any browned particles into the liquid. Reduce the wine until nearly evaporated. You should have about a tablespoon of syrupy liquid.

Add the beef broth and continue to reduce until very syrupy. Add $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pomegranate juice. Boil slightly until heated through and blended. Longer cooking will cause the sauce to lose its pomegranate flavor. Remove from the heat and stir in the reserved pomegranate seeds.

While the liquids are reducing, slice the duck breast into thin slices. Trap any meat juices that are exuded and add those to your sauce. Place the duck slices on a plate and spoon over the hot sauce and pomegranate seeds.