

CLASSIC ROAST GOOSE WITH CIDER GRAVY



A foolproof guide to cooking this festive favourite with a simple gravy

Ingredients:

4-5kg/9-11lb 4 oz oven-ready goose, trussed for roasting
6 small onions, halved
3 bay leaves
bunch thyme
2 tbsp sunflower oil

For the cider gravy:

1 tbsp sunflower oil
goose neck, chopped into a few pieces
2 carrots cut into small chunks
2 onions, chopped
2 bay leaves
small bunch thyme
500ml bottle cider
1l chicken stock
4 tbsp plain flour

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Remove all the fat from inside the bird and use a skewer to prick the skin all over, especially under the wings. Season the inside and stuff the goose with the onions and herbs. Rub the breast and legs with the oil; season generously with salt. Sit the bird, the right way up, in a large roasting tin. Cover with a large piece of foil, scrunching it up at the sides so it's a tight fit. Place the goose in the oven for 1 hr 30 mins.
2. Take the goose out of the oven, then remove the foil, carefully ladle all the fat out of the tin (or use a baster to suck it out) into a bowl, then lightly baste the goose. Re-cover with foil, and then roast for another 1 hr 30 mins. Pour all the fat from the tin again, baste, and then return to the oven without any foil to brown for a final 30-40 mins until golden brown. Don't worry about whether it's done - the goose will be cooked all the way through. Transfer the goose to a large board or platter to rest in a warmish place for 30 mins. Keep the tin to finish the gravy in.

3. To make the gravy, while the goose is roasting, heat the oil in a sauté pan until very hot, add the pieces of goose neck, and then fry until browned and caramelised. Add the veg to the pan, and then fry for about 10 mins until brown and just starting to burn slightly. Throw in the herbs, then pour over the cider and boil down by about two-thirds, skimming off any froth that comes to the top. Pour in the chicken stock, reduce by half, then strain into a large jug and set aside. The stock can be made the day before.

4. Once the goose has come out of the tin, pour all but about 2 tbsp of fat from it, keeping in any brown juices. Place the tin on the heat, scatter in the flour and stir to make a brown paste the texture of wet sand. Slowly pour in the cider stock and stir to make a smooth gravy. Season to taste, then strain again into a gravy jug.

5. Serve the goose on a platter with the herby onions from the cavity scattered around.

Cooking times

The timings in this recipe will give you a perfectly roasted goose of about 5kg. If your goose is larger, increase the cooking times with the foil on by 15 minutes per 500g extra, giving all birds a final 30 minutes uncovered to brown.

Tip

It may seem a little strange rubbing the goose with oil first, but fat renders fat, so in the long run you will end up with less fatty, crisper skin.

Buying geese

Geese come with a bag in the cavity containing the liver, giblets, neck and extra fat. The liver can be used to make pâté, the giblets will make a tasty stock, the neck is used in the gravy and the fat can be rendered and kept.

Goose fat

Goose fat is wonderful for roasting and frying, so keep any that is left over. The fat can be kept in the fridge for up to 1 month or frozen for 6 months.