



A delicious duck holds court

This week, recipes come from Conor Mee of The Courthouse in Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan (courthouserestaurant.ie). He will be cooking at the Taste of Monaghan festival, which takes place from October 7 to 9; the full programme for the event is at tasteofmonaghan.com.

Roast Silverhill duck with swede, black pudding and apple

Ingredients, serves two
 2 duck crowns
 30g ground spices (cinnamon, mixed, fennel, clove, star anise)
 100ml honey
 1 swede (a turnip will also work)
 20g butter
 100ml chicken or duck stock
 50g black pudding
 1 Bramley apple, cored, peeled

and diced
 50g prunes, chopped
 50g sugar
 20ml red wine vinegar

Method
 1 The day before you plan to serve the dish, poach the ducks on the bone in salted water at a very low temperature of 60C for half an hour. Be careful not to overheat the water.
 2 Remove, then sprinkle the duck with your spice mix and salt, and allow to cool in fridge overnight.
 3 The next day, pre-heat the oven to 250C. Put the duck crowns on a tray and roast for



Conor Mee, chef at The Courthouse in Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan
 Picture: Michelle McCarron

15 minutes before removing from the oven and allow to cool slightly.
 4 Remove the breast meat from the bone of the duck crowns and place on a tray, then glaze with the honey. Turn the oven down to 200C.
 5 Put the diced apple, chopped

prunes, vinegar and sugar into a pot. Cook slowly with a lid on until the apple is soft, then put the entire mix into a food processor until smooth. Taste, and adjust if you like with a little more sugar or vinegar.
 6 Slice or dice the swede as finely as possible and cook in the stock and butter until it is crunchy.
 7 Crumble and fry your black pudding.
 8 Place the honey-glazed duck into the 200C oven for six to seven minutes before removing. Serve with the swede, crumbled black pudding, and apple and prune purée.



Roast organic plums with almond cake and Brehon Porter ice cream

Ingredients, serves six
 10 plums
 100ml honey

For the almond cake
 125g softened butter
 125g caster sugar
 125g ground almonds
 2 eggs, beaten
 50g gluten-free flour
 Zest of one orange

For the ice cream
 250ml fresh cream
 150ml milk
 100ml Brehon Porter
 75g caster sugar
 25ml treacle
 125ml egg yolks

Method
 1 Make the cake the day before you plan to eat the dish. Pre-heat the oven to 170C and line a 1lb tin or small tray with parchment paper.
 2 Put the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl, and cream until white. Add the beaten egg and a little flour at a time, until all of it has been incorporated.
 3 Add the ground almonds and orange zest, then pour the mixture into your baking tin or tray and cook until the cake is firm or a small knife inserted into it comes out clean - this should take around 25 minutes. Cool on a rack.
 4 To make the ice cream, mix the treacle, sugar and egg yolks in a food mixer and whisk until the mixture doubles in volume.
 5 Put the egg yolks and sugar into a bowl. Boil the milk and cream together in a pot, then pour half of the liquid over the eggs and sugar, and stir. Pour the remaining liquid into the bowl and stir again, then put the mixture back into the pot.

6 Warm gently on a low heat, stirring all the time, until the mixture starts to thicken and reaches 82 degrees on a thermometer, or coats the back of the wooden spoon. Be careful not to go beyond this heat, or the mix will scramble.
 7 Take off the heat and pour in the porter, then stir for a couple of minutes to slow down the cooking. Strain onto a baking tray, and allow to cool in fridge. When cold, churn it in an ice cream machine in small batches - these quantities make a litre of ice cream, so you can save some to serve with an autumn fruit crumble or traditional apple tart.
 8 To make the plums, heat the oven to 250C. Split the plums in half and remove stones. Caramelize the honey in a pan until golden, place the plums in the tray cut side down, and cook in the oven for four minutes.
 9 Serve the plums with a slice of almond cake (you can warm it up in the microwave) and a scoop of ice cream.