

JULIANNA'S PERIGORD PIE for 6

I spent some pleasant weeks researching a recipe for "Perigord Pie" which was so popular in England among the leisured classes of the 19th century. Along the way I collected numerous literary references from such authors as Disraeli, Sir Richard Burton, Surtees, Washington Irving & Edith Wharton. Not much the wiser, I eventually created my own recipe, photographing the key stages as I went.

Here is the finished result :



It should have had the birds' heads & beaks poking out, but I didn't think my guests could stomach that!

As it was, the pie went down a treat, and was declared to be a "tour de force".

The morning after, I discovered a genuine recipe. It called for a pound of truffles, so it's just as well I only came upon it after inventing a very palatable version.

PERIGORD PIE

Collect : 6 lightly roasted quails, 6 rounds French bread, 6 dried figs, 6 prunes, 6 shelled walnuts (both halves), 3 slices streaky bacon, a magret de canard (lean duck breast). 200g brown cap mushrooms, a small tin (150g) foie gras, a 200g tin of sauce Périgourdine truffée, a 25g packet of dried ceps, a large circle of shortcrust pastry. For the glaze, an egg yolk mixed with a little milk. To marinate the figs & prunes, a glass of eau de vie (mine was "vieille prune"). Butter, salt, pepper, half a cube of chicken stock, water, a mixture of berries including juniper, to grind into the sauce. And, to use as a relish, a jar of fig & walnut jam.

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If you can't get some of the ingredients – IMPROVISE!

Remove the legs & wings of the quails and stew them in a pan with two glasses of water and half a chicken stock cube.

Remove the stones from the prunes, insert a walnut in each one. Marinade the figs and prunes in a glass of eau de vie.



Re-constitute the dried ceps according to the instructions on the packet.

Open the two tins but chill the foie gras.

Clean the mushrooms and slice each one in three or four pieces including the stalk. Sauté them in seasoned butter. Set aside.

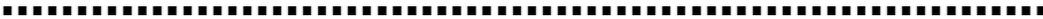




Remove the fat skin from the magret and chop it into small cubes. Brown them for several minutes in the pan used for the mushrooms, adding more butter if necessary. Set aside.

Stuff the quails with a prune and a fig each. Place half a rasher of streaky bacon on each one.

Put the magret in the middle of a large, flat tart dish. Place the six slices of bread round it symmetrically.





Slice the chilled foie gras into 6 rounds and place one on each piece of bread.

Place a stuffed quail on each piece of foie gras.

Warm the Sauce Perigourdine in the pan, then mix in the mushrooms and the drained ceps. Pour this mixture over the magret, allowing it to ooze between the quails.





Unroll the shortcrust pastry and lay it over the birds and meat. Make sure there are no gaps through which the sauce could escape at the edges, but puncture the pastry with a fork to allow the steam out.

Pre-heat the oven to 200°.

Glaze the pie by brushing it with the yolk & milk mixture.

Bake for about 30 minutes. If you do not bake it too brown, you can prepare it in advance and re-heat it for about 15 minutes, later, before serving.





Serve with a pouring sauce made from the stewed limbs and the relish.

We ate our pie with red cabbage which I had prepared earlier, and a watercress salad.

Julianna Lees - Montagrier
