



FOOD

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THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

SECTION E

Taste for duck

With Ottawa facing off against Anaheim, is it any wonder loyal Sens fans have a sudden craving for grilled waterfowl?

Of all the feathered creatures great and small, duck must certainly be among the most tasty. Every summer I can safely predict I'll consume more than my fair share on the grill and in the frypan. Properly prepared, duck ranks among the most succulent fowl on earth.

The fact that Ottawa's home team is pitted against a gaggle of grown men who choose to call themselves Ducks inspires us today to introduce others to this delectable treat, too. As if we needed any more reason.

To that end, we have assembled



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tasty do-at-home recipes on page E2 to enjoy duck seared in a sauté pan, baked in the oven, sizzling on the grill, and turning slowly on a rotisserie spit.

Oh, let us count the ways.

And, for the kitchen-challenged

among us, we can also point you to restaurants in Chinatown like the Mekong at 637 Somerset St. W., where obliging proprietors Dennis and Ruby Luc are only too happy to serve up duck, duck, and more duck, either in their dining room or in a plastic box to take out.

Try their savoury chunky duck soup (\$3.99 a bowl), or delightful soy duck (\$16 for half a duck), as well as the more famous Peking duck (\$29.99 for a whole bird complete with two different courses and side dishes).

See DUCK on PAGE E2

Duck: Tasty morsels to make or take out



ROD MACIVOR, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Executive chef Colin Thornton at the Fairmont Château Laurier gets in the Sens spirit with Tangerine Roasted Duck Breast.

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One course of the Peking duck includes the crispy skin, crêpes and garnishes, while the second offers the meat along with stir-fry vegetables.

Takeout orders are 10 per cent cheaper than eat-in. During the playoffs, whole barbecue duck for takeout is on special at the Mekong for \$18.

Duck is also on the menu at other restaurants in Chinatown. On my recent visit I spotted duck roasted, shredded and braised on the menu at Yang Sheng Restaurant, 662 Somerset St. W.

At New Great Wall Restaurant, 704 Somerset St. W., the duck comes barbecued.

And you can buy whole barbecue duck hanging in the window at Wa Kiu Foods, 713 Somerset St. W., at \$14.50 each. Owner Hong Chhay Ngo will cheerfully chop it into manageable pieces and stuff it into a plastic box for you to graze on during a Sens game.

I ask, can it get any better?

Peking duck is an elaborately prepared Chinese dish where air is pumped between the duck's skin and the flesh. It's then coated with a honey mixture and hung until the skin is hard and dry, then roasted.

As you can imagine, Peking duck takes a fair bit of work so Ms. Luc at the Mekong suggests you order it at least six hours ahead by calling the restaurant at 613-237-7717. Then, simply pick up your duck before the game, follow her reheating instructions, and

stuff yourself silly while basking in the glow of sage commentary by Ron McLean and Don Cherry.

A word of advice when preparing duck — the bird, not the team: Do not overcook it.

Health experts say duck should be cooked to an internal meat temperature of 165°F (74°C) to remove any possibility of foodborne illness. But chefs tend to treat duck breasts like red meat where, marinated and cooked on the grill, they are served a bit pink in the middle, like good steak.

If you follow your instincts and cook duck to death as you do chicken, a duck breast will be tough and stringy. Me, I serve duck breast at 150° to 155°F (68°C) and am still alive to talk about it, but you'll have to decide for yourself how rare you're prepared to go.

As for libation to wash it down, *Citizen* wine columnist Rod Phillips suggests the classic pairing, pinot noir. Try Condo Sur Pinot from Chile, or to keep it Canadian reach for Henry of Pelham Pinot Noir.

The recipes, here, offer something for everyone.

Experienced home cooks will appreciate executive chef Colin Thornton's multi-faceted Tangerine Roasted Duck Breast with a Grand Marnier and risotto from the Fairmont Château Laurier. By all means, you don't have to do the whole recipe if you'd rather cut corners and just serve duck (but, oh, please try the Grand Marnier sauce).



ROD MACIVOR, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Ruby Luc of Mekong restaurant presents a popular plate of crispy duck skin, traditionally served with a crêpe or thin pancake.

Charcoal Grilled Mariposa Duck Breast with Fruit Jus will get you grilling after briefly rendering out the fat in a pan.

Finally, from Ottawa TV producer Chris Knight, well-known about town as a man

who loves his duck served on the rare side, we have Peking Style Spit-Roasted Duck that offers you oriental flavours without leaving the backyard.

Sure beats the heck out of a bucket of chicken.