

## Duck a l'Orange – Comfort du Jour

This recipe is not complicated, and the ingredients are simple. But once you begin cooking the duck, it demands your full attention. Have the side dishes, the sauce, the wine, music, table settings—all of it—ready in advance and this dish will work out fine.

It is fancy in a classic kind of way, delicious and totally worth the trouble!

Recipe adapted from [this one by Martha Stewart](#)

### INGREDIENTS

2 pieces boneless duck breast, patted dry  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1/4 cup cane sugar  
2 Tbsp. orange muscat champagne vinegar\* (see notes)  
2 oranges, juiced, plus the zest of one of the oranges\*  
1 medium shallot, minced\*  
3/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth  
1 Tbsp. salted butter, cold from the fridge

### \*NOTES

The orange muscat champagne vinegar is a Trader Joe's product, but you may substitute any other variety of orange-infused vinegar or a regular cider or white vinegar. The main thing is acidity, so substitute what you have on hand, but don't use anything overly sweet.

Because the orange zest is used in the final dish, I recommend using organic oranges if possible.

Shallot is recommended for this recipe, but if you do not have them, substitute finely minced sweet or red onion. Do not confuse shallots with scallions, which are green onions. The shape and flavor of the two are distinctly different.

### INSTRUCTIONS

The recipe that inspired me listed only four steps, but what's "easy" for Martha Stewart deserves a second look by the rest of us! I've broken it down into more specific tasks, to help you be fully prepared for the fast pace of the recipe. First, prep the duck and make the orange sauce.

1. Using a very sharp knife, score the fatty side of the duck breast, making diamond-shaped cuts about 1/2" apart over the entire surface of fat. Be careful not to cut into the flesh, as this will lead to overcooking the meat. Season both sides of the breast pieces with salt and pepper and set them aside while you make the sauce.
2. In a glass measuring cup, combine vinegar, shallot, orange juice, orange zest and chicken broth.

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3. In a medium, heavy-bottomed sauce pot, cook sugar over medium heat. Do not stir the melting sugar. Use a silicone spatula or scraper to move sugar to the middle of the pan as it begins to melt. This will help prevent burning at the edges.
4. When sugar is fully melted and deep amber in color, carefully pour in juice-broth mixture. This will sputter and pop quite a bit. Whisk mixture until it's evenly blended. The sauce will thicken up as it cooks, and it will reduce to about 2/3 cup volume after 20 minutes. Give it a quick twist of black pepper, then set the pan aside for quick re-warming later.

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### NEXT, COOK THE DUCK BREAST:

5. Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. When skillet is warm (not hot), add duck breast, fat side-down and leave it alone for at least five minutes. This allows time for some of the fat to render from the duck breast. Use tongs to hold the duck breasts in place, while tilting the skillet to drain the duck fat off into another skillet or bowl and continue searing until the duck skin is crispy and golden brown, about 10 minutes total. (I used the drained-off duck fat to fry the smashed fingerling potatoes we served with dinner, but I recommend that you have a kitchen assistant to do that.)
6. When the fat is mostly rendered and duck skin is super crispy, turn the breast pieces over to cook the meat side for about 5 minutes. Internal temperature of the duck breast should be about 130° F for medium rare. Allow breast pieces to rest 8 to 10 minutes on a cutting board.
7. While the duck breasts rest, place saucepan over medium heat to warm the orange sauce again. When mixture begins to steam and simmer at the edges, remove from heat and immediately add cold butter, swirling it with a fork to blend it into the sauce.
8. Slice duck breasts into 1/2" pieces. Fan slices of duck onto serving plates, spoon sauce over the slices and serve immediately.

We served the duck a l'orange with pan-fried fingerling potatoes. Boil the potatoes until fork-tender, then cool slightly and gently smash, or flatten, them with the bottom of a skillet or pan. Set them aside until ready to crisp them up for serving. Heat extra duck fat or butter over medium-high heat. Fry smashed potatoes in fat until golden brown and crispy. You should have time to do this while the duck is resting. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve.