

Food & Wine

December 2005

By Master Cook: Jacques Pepin

When I was growing up in France, the only time I remember ever having goose was on Christmas Eve. For that reason, I always associate goose with other traditional holiday foods: chestnuts, oysters, foie gras, bûche de Noël and oranges. (Yes, oranges, which were a delicacy imported from North Africa only at Christmastime.) Goose is now sold year-round but about 75 percent is prepared during the holidays. You can buy fresh birds, but most of the geese at stores are (or were at one time) frozen. I've had wonderful luck cooking thawed geese, which are young and quite tender.

Roasted Goose with Crispy Skin

Active: 30 min; Total: 3 hr 20 min

Plus overnight drying

6 servings

Separate the skin from the meat, then steam the goose before roasting – an adaptation of a Chinese technique that helps the bird baste in its own fat and ensures crispy skin.

One 12-pound goose, neck and giblets reserved, visible fat removed

Salt and freshly ground pepper

4 ¼ cups warm water

1 ½ tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon Tabasco

1 teaspoon potato starch dissolved in 2 tablespoons red or white wine

1. **ROAST THE GOOSE:** Beginning at the neck end, work your fingers under the goose skin, snipping any fibers and sinews with kitchen scissors; work your fingers as far down over the thighs as possible. Using a sharp knife, cut halfway through the wing and leg joints to help the bird cook evenly. Generously season the goose inside and out with salt and pepper.
2. Set the goose on a rack in a heavy roasting pan, breast side up. Add the neck, gizzard, and liver and 4 cups of the water to the pan. Cover the goose with foil and seal the foil all around the edge of the pan. Bring the water to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and steam for 45 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool. Transfer the rack with the goose to a rimmed baking sheet and refrigerate uncovered overnight, until the skin is very dry, like parchment. Strain the pan juices and refrigerate. Bring the goose to room temperature before roasting.
3. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, mix the honey with the Tabasco and the remaining ¼ cup of water. Return the rack to the pan and roast the goose for 1 hour, basting occasionally with the Tabasco mixture. Carefully turn the goose breast side down. Roast for about 30 minutes longer, basting occasionally. The is done when an instant-read thermometer inserted in the inner thigh registers 170 degrees. Turn off the oven and let it cool to 160 degrees. Transfer the goose to a

heatproof platter, breast side up. Return the goose to the oven and let it rest for 20 minutes.

4. **MEANWHILE, MAKE THE JUS:** Pour off the fat in the roasting pan. Scrape the solidified fat off the refrigerated pan juices and refrigerate for another use. Add the juices to the pan and bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits on the bottom. Pour the juices into a small saucepan. Stir in the potato starch slurry and simmer, stirring, until slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Season the jus with salt and pepper and strain it into a gravy boat. Carve the goose and pass the jus at the table.

WINE: Rich goose pairs well with a voluptuous Pinot Noir like the 2003 Picchetti Winery Truchard Vineyard, loaded with the earthy black cherry fruit, or the spicy, aromatic 2003 Handley Mendocino County.