

Whiskey / Orange Pheasant

Ingredients

1/4 cup Scotch whiskey
2 oranges, cut into 1/8ths
4 sprigs fresh thyme
2 (2 to 2 1/2-pound) pheasants
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
6 slices bacon, halved
Whiskey-Cumberland Sauce:
1 cup Scotch whiskey
1/2 cup fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons grated orange zest
1 cup red currant jelly
1/4 teaspoon salt
Pinch cayenne

Serving suggestion: Wild rice

Directions

For the pheasant: Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a bowl, toss the oranges with 3 tablespoons of the whisky. Rub the pheasants with the remaining 1 tablespoon of whiskey and lightly season with salt and pepper. Stuff each pheasant with the oranges and 1 sprig of fresh thyme, and close the cavities with skewers. Wrap the breast of each pheasant with the bacon and set in a roasting pan. Roast the pheasants until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast registers 160 degrees F., about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand 10 minutes.

For the Whiskey Cumberland Sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine the whiskey, orange juice, and orange zest, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced by 50 percent in volume to about 3/4 cup. Add the currant jelly, salt, and cayenne, and stir well.

Cook until thickened, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and pour into a decorative bowl. Cool slightly before serving.

Remove the bacon from the pheasant breasts, if desired, and cut each bird in half. Discard the oranges and thyme in the cavity. Serve hot with Whiskey-Cumberland Sauce and wild rice