

## *Le Nelhouët Farm Buckeye Confit*©

By Frederic Beranger

Confit is a method of cooking more than a recipe. It implies cooking an item slowly in a transient element like oil, fat, sugar, or butter to substitute the water in the food item being cooked. In this case it will be cooking chicken in fat. Although most people may be put off to the idea of cooking in fat, those who try the dish will quickly discover this long held traditional French specialty is truly a treat to savor for special occasions.

The secret to our particular success with this dish is that we try to incorporate ingredients from sources that are known to us personally. We either raise our own birds or purchase pasture raised animals or at the very least free range and antibiotic free birds. In anticipation of creating a confit, we collect and preserve fat from previous dinners that include duck, goose, or heritage turkey until we have enough (~2 cups) for a confit. After the holiday season is typically the time of year we think about the dish. Normally we collect the cooled drippings in an air tight container or ziplock bag and refrigerate or freeze it until needed for the confit.

We choose Buckeye chicken as one of our favorite items to be cooked in the confit method. Note that this dish is a three day process but well worth the wait!

### Buckeye Confit

#### Ingredients:

1-2 whole Buckeyes (~3-4 lbs each)

2 1/2 cups of fat drippings (from duck, heritage turkey, or goose)

1/2 - 2/3 cup of chicken stock (if needed due to lack of fat drippings)

#### Dry rub:

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp cracked black pepper

1/2 tsp fresh minced garlic

1/2 tsp thyme

There are primarily three steps in the three day process of making a Buckeye confit.

Day 1: Starting with a whole bird, first separate legs and de-bone the breasts being careful to make sure the skin remains on all of the pieces. Combine the dry rub ingredients listed above and coat the inside of the separated legs then take the two pieces and press them together like closing a book with the skin side out. Coat the skinless sides of the breasts with the dry rub and press the two pieces together, skin side out. Put the sandwiched pieces in a covered dish and refrigerate overnight so they can marinate.

\*Note- If you are wondering what to do with the leftover meat and bones, think about doing a nice stock in the event that you don't have enough fat for step #2.

Day 2:

Preheat the oven to 275° F. Take the still sandwiched pieces of meat and place them in a baking dish just small enough for the meat to fill it completely. Cover the meat with the preserved poultry fat drippings. If you do not have enough fat to cover the meat, you can add some poultry stock to compensate so long as it is less than a quarter of the total amount of fat used for the confit.

Cook the Buckeye for 3 - 3 ½ hours or until the meat is fork tender or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Remove the dish from the oven and let the confit cool to room temperature. Keeping the Buckeye in the baking dish, refrigerate it once again noting that all of the meat should be submerged in fat at this point.

Day 3:

The refrigerated meat can remain good to eat for up to several days since it is now preserved in fat. When you are ready to serve the Buckeye, heat a skillet on the stove to med-high. Drop 2 Tbs of the fat from the baking dish with the meat into the skillet and spread it across the pan to coat. Remove the Buckeye from the baking dish with your hands and not with a spatula or fork. This is important because it will preserve the integrity of the pieces of meat. Carefully separate the sandwiched pieces from each other and place them skin side down in the hot skillet. Heat until they are ceased and heated throughout. Serve immediately.

It is key to serve the Buckeye immediately after heating it up. It can be served with a wide variety of dishes but it is best to serve it beside something light such as a salad. This dish lends itself wonderfully to parties since you can do all of the prep several days ahead of time.

Serves 3-4

Bon Appetite!

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### ***Le Nelhouët Farm Rotisserie Buckeye***

By Frederic Beranger

My family was fortunate enough to have been given a small electric rotisserie for Christmas and we have stepped up to the challenge of finding the best dishes for the new cooking instrument. One of our favorites is rotisserie chicken with our Buckeyes and is quite simply the easiest recipe for this delightful meat. This cooking method makes for a sumptuous bird every time and allows the chicken to be cooked with the least amount of retained fat. Although we like a less fatty bird to eat, we don't waste the fat itself as it is culinary "liquid gold". The rotisserie allows us to easily collect the drippings in the catch pan for use in future dishes, such as confits or patés, that call for high quality fat.

Ingredients:

1 whole Buckeye chicken (4-5 lbs)  
2 Tbs olive oil  
¼ tsp salt  
¼ tsp cracked black pepper  
¼ tsp rosemary  
¼ tsp thyme  
¼ tsp sage

First you skewer the chicken onto the rotisserie forks securely and tie the legs and wings with kitchen grade cotton twine so they don't hit the heating element of the rotisserie.

Combine the olive oil, salt, pepper, rosemary, thyme, and sage and brush the mixture over the entire chicken. Place the prepared chicken into the rotisserie cook for roughly 18+ minutes per pound or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Most of the latest rotisseries do not have temperature settings but an estimated cooking temperature may be 350-375°+ F. Note that in the rotisserie, the chicken may cook more quickly than it would in a standard oven so keep careful watch.

This method allows for a delicious and moist chicken every time and is a great alternative to baking.

Serves 3-4

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