

# chef PAUL COLLINS

## ROASTED LOCAL PHEASANT, BRAISED LEG PIE, CONFIT SHALLOTS, SMOKED BACON & CHESTNUT MUSHROOMS



For me this dish represents a real braised winter warmer.

I don't think we cook as much pheasant as we should do, you can pick up a brace of these gorgeous birds for about £5-£6 off your butcher which makes great economic sense and also as we seem to shoot thousands of Pheasants in season, but never actually eat as many as are raised in the name of sport!

So as they are there in abundance at this time of year, and we should make more use of them.

I much prefer the longer cooking dishes during these colder months where you have to braise things slowly in herbs and stock so that the flavours are all captured in the finished dish.

I don't think that a lot of people eat Pheasants, but a lot of people are a little afraid of over cooking them and this way you can keep the breasts nice and moist by cooking them separately but have a real hearty braised dish with the legs, in fact you could just have the whole thing as a pie by the addition of the breasts of pheasant to the leg meat so that it just really does become one big pie!

Anna potatoes are a classic and go very well with this type of dish, so do have a go at making those as they really are a great alternative to roasties on a Sunday.

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## **Ingredients for 4**

2 Pheasants

1 Carrot

4 Shallots

2 Bay Leaves

Sprig of Fresh Thyme

1 Tsp Tomato Puree

Tsp Red Currant Jelly

750ml Good Chicken Stock

2 Tspn Olive Oil

200g Puff Pastry

1 Egg

## *For The Garnish:*

4 Chestnut Mushrooms Cut into ¼

4 Rashers Streaky Smoked Bacon thinly sliced

16 Round Peeled Shallots

2 tbsp. olive oil

Place a pan on the stove and add the olive oil, add the peeled shallots and cook for 5-6 minutes moving around every minute or so, so that they do not burn. Add the chopped up bacon and the mushrooms with 2-3 minutes to go so that they do not overcook. Check the seasoning and drain all of the ingredients onto kitchen paper to drain off any excess oil.

Keep warm until required.

## *For the pie filling*

Turn on the oven at 180c.

Take the legs off your birds or better still get your butcher to do it for you and while he is at it get him to remove the wishbones.

Season the legs, and then seal them off in a hot pan after 4-5 minutes add the chopped shallots, carrot and the thyme and bay leaf.

When they are sealed all over cover add the tomato puree and the red currant jelly cover them in the stock and turn down the heat. You can now place the whole pan into the oven

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and allow them to cook for 30-45 minutes until the meat is very tender and falls away from the bone.

Allow them to cool and flake the meat off the bone, remove any sinews and small bones and reserve this meat in a bowl until required.

Place the stock back on the boil and reduce until you have the right consistency of gravy.

You will not need to add any flour or other thickening to this.

Roll out the pastry to 5 mm thick and cut out 1 medium sized circle and 1 slightly larger.

Once the leg meat is cooled down add a little of the reduced gravy to it and check the seasoning.

Brush the bottom circle of the pastry with the egg wash and place it on to a tray ready for the oven.

Egg wash the other pastry circle and gently mark a curved line from the centre out all the way around.

Now place the leg meat in the middle of the pastry circle on the tray and cover with the other pastry circle. Seal down the sides and press in with your finger and the back of a knife all the way round to ensure a secure seal. Allow to rest and then bake in a pre-heated oven for 15 minutes.

While that is resting and ready to go in the oven season and then seal the whole pheasants in a little olive oil, cook for 15- 20 minutes in the same oven as the pie and then once cooked allow to rest for 10 minutes.

Then serve the whole bird on a board along with all of the other components so that you can help yourself. I really enjoy this way of eating where you can help yourself to food all laid out, it has a real feeling of love and generosity in it and think that this is the way we should serve a great Sunday lunch.

## *Pommes Anna*

6 Large Potatoes

200g Butter

Salt & Pepper

Slice the potatoes very thinly as you would do for dauphinoise potatoes, if you have a mandolin, even better. Arrange in an ovenproof dish putting a little bit of the melted butter and some seasoning as you go on each layer. On the very last layer arrange neatly as this is the presentation top that your friends or guests will see.

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Bake in the centre of a pre heated oven for approximately 45 minutes until a knife goes through with no resistance.

As these take so long to cook, you may want to cook them before you start the other parts as these will be quite easy to re heat nearer the finishing time.

Enjoy with some purple sprouting.....