

Food

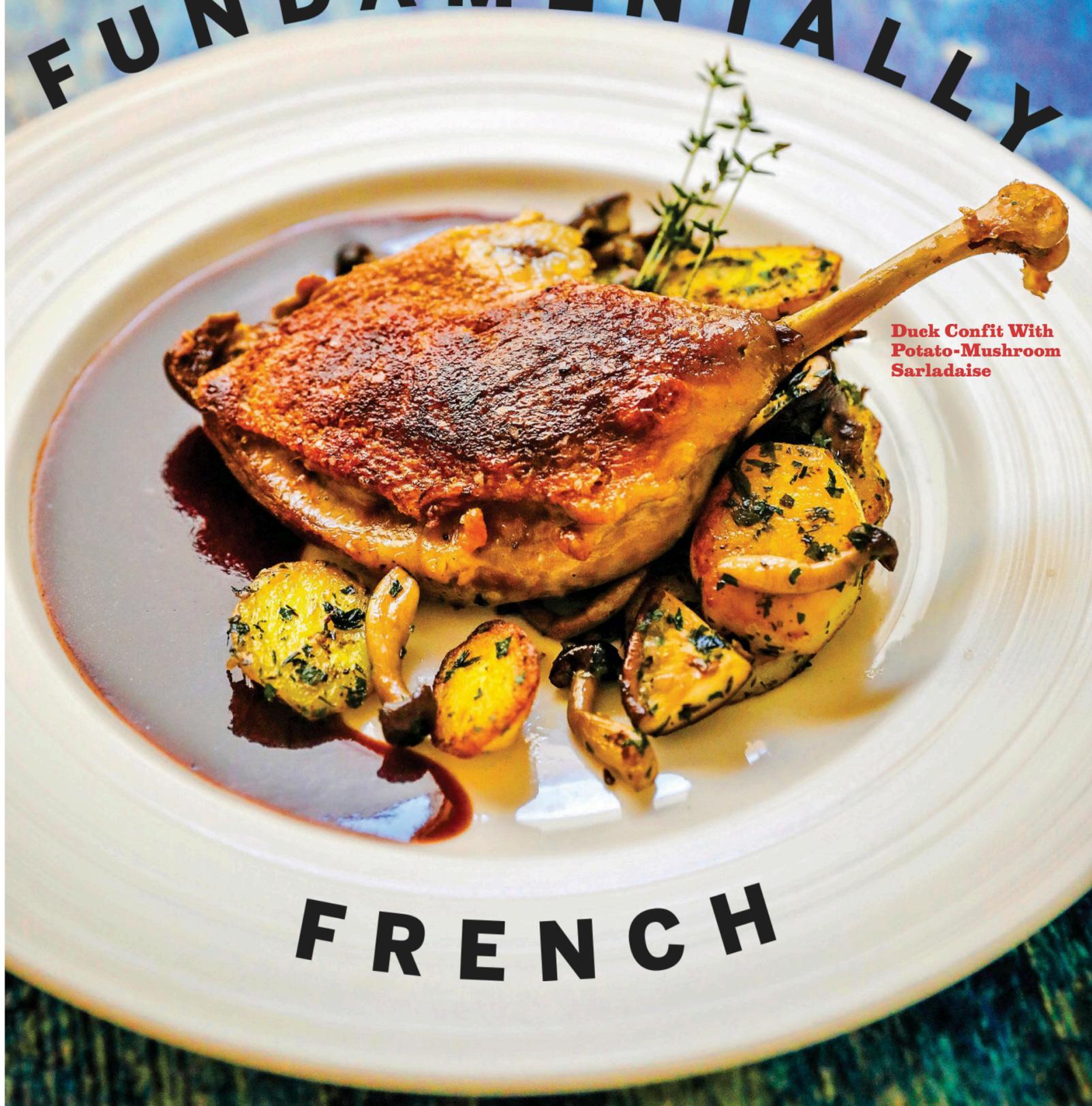
Chef offers a Francophile's guide to make-at-home duck confit, madeleines

BY CARON GOLDEN

When it comes to French cuisine, Americans from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to Julia Child and now, to us, have been in a near-constant swoon. We adore croissants, macarons, crepes, ratatouille and a good Burgundy. We wish our omelets were as creamy and light as theirs. To many of us, Jacques Pepin is a kindly, accessible French culinary god. ■ But is French cuisine something we cook at home? French-born San Diego chef Bruno Albouze, who has a YouTube channel and website (brunoalbouze.com) filled with recipes and cooking videos,

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FUNDAMENTALLY



Duck Confit With Potato-Mushroom Sarladaise

FRENCH

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ANITA L. ARAMBULA Confessions of a Foodie



E4 • Buttery pound cake evokes early years of baking exploration.

ONE-PAN CHICKEN-CORN RECIPE KEEPS LOOSE KERNELS IN CHECK

Rich, herby summertime dinner with brightness of lime comes together fast

BY MELISSA CLARK

Because of my daughter's braces, our family's summer corn-on-the-cob-palooza has been temporarily nixed. Corn is still on the menu — thank goodness — but the kernels need to be cut off the cob, lest any gnawing ravage the delicate infrastructure of modern orthodontics.

The upside to all this is that my corn kernel repertoire has expanded beyond salads, creamed corn and cornbread.

In this speedy one-pan recipe, I've paired the kernels with boneless, skinless chicken thighs seasoned with brown butter, basil and a squeeze of fresh lime for a dish that's rich and sweet, tangy and herby, and a friend to braces-wearers and their corn-loving companions. (It's also great for anyone looking for something easy to make for dinner on any summer night.)

The fastest and least messy method I've found for cutting the

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DAVID MALOSH NYT

Browned butter adds a nuttiness to the corn, which is paired with flavorful chicken thighs.



NANCEE E. LEWIS PHOTOS FOR THE U-T

Chef Bruno Albouze applies madeleine batter to a form before baking. Not more than an ounce of dough goes in each form in the madeleine pan. The small cakes are baked in the oven atop a preheated pizza stone.



Duck Confit

Duck legs and duck fat can be found locally at Iowa Meat Farms in Grantville and Siesel's Meat & Deli in Bay Park (call first to verify availability), and duck fat can also be purchased at Whole Foods or ordered online. Duck confit should be prepared days ahead of serving it.

Makes 6 servings

FOR THE DUCK CONFIT:

6 duck legs (5 pounds) 12 garlic cloves, crushed
 ¼ cup grey salt 1 bunch fresh thyme sprigs
 (or coarse kosher salt) 5½ cups duck fat

FOR THE GLAZE:

3 cups low-sodium chicken stock or ¾ cup chicken or veal demi-glace and ¾ cups water ⅓ cup mushroom stems
 ⅓ cup carrots, chopped 1 bay leaf
 ⅓ cup white part of leeks, chopped 1 sprig thyme
 ⅓ cup onion, chopped 3 peppercorns
 1 clove garlic, crushed ¾ cup rendered duck jus
 1½ tablespoons (20 g) orange peels from half an orange ¾ cup ruby port plus
 1 tablespoon for the slurry
 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter

TO SERVE:

Potato-Mushroom Sarladaise (recipe follows)
 ½ cup English peas, blanched (optional)

Brine the duck: Start by trimming excess fat from duck legs if needed, leaving skin intact over meat. Save these scraps. Knuckles can be left on or removed by frenching. Arrange duck legs on a large, shallow dish or tray lined with parchment, flesh side up, and spread salt all over along with the crushed garlic and fresh thyme. Wrap in plastic film and refrigerate to brine for 12 to 24 hours. Salt-curing the meat acts as a preservative. Thoroughly rinse salt from duck. Discard garlic and herbs (or save the garlic to confit in duck fat, cooking on low heat for about 45 minutes). Pat dry duck legs.

Gather the scraps and cook in a saucepan on low heat to render fat. Drain and save. Discard solids.

Cook the duck legs: Preheat conventional oven to 225 degrees. Arrange duck legs skin side up in a Dutch oven or a large deep roasting pan. Cover them with melted duck fat and bring to a boil. Seal with parchment and lid or foil and place in the oven. Cook duck until meat is tender, about 3 hours. Remove from oven, take off lid and leave the legs to rest for an additional hour on the stove top. Gently transfer legs from the fat to a wire rack lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Meanwhile, carefully strain the duck fat into a bowl and leave it to cool until it reaches about 95 degrees, then refrigerate. Note: Under the duck fat is a thick layer of rendered duck jus, which is a concentration of flavor and collagen you want to save for the glaze. Once completely chilled, the fat and the rendered jus can be separated and both can be refrigerated. Save the jus for making the glaze.

To preserve the duck legs in fat, arrange legs standing up in a clean container bone side up. Pour in lukewarm duck fat, completely submerging all but the tip of the bone. You can refrigerate the legs for up to 3 weeks. Duck confit can also be vacuum-sealed and kept refrigerated for weeks, or frozen for longer.

Create duck confit with glaze: Mix together demi-glace with water or use low-sodium chicken stock. Add carrots, leeks, onions, garlic, orange peels, mushroom stems, and herbs and peppercorns, then bring to a boil and then lower the heat to simmer. The goal is to reduce it by half, which should take about an hour. Add rendered duck jus and continue to simmer.

Meanwhile, reduce the port by two-thirds so it is syrupy. Remove stock from heat and pour through a sieve to eliminate solids. Pour the liquid into the reduced port and stir to mix. Season with salt and pepper, then let simmer for another 20 minutes. Taste the sauce and reduce further if needed.

Whisk together the extra port and cornstarch in a small container to make a smooth slurry. Whisk half of the slurry into the simmering sauce and bring to a boil. Check the viscosity of the sauce and swirl in more slurry if needed. Stir in butter to give the glaze a glossy finish. Do not bring back to a boil. Set the glaze aside.

To put the complete dish together: Slowly reheat the duck legs in duck fat if refrigerated. For vacuum-sealed legs, immerse in boiling water for about 10 minutes. Once the legs are reheated, heat a frying pan and add a dash of duck fat. Sear the legs, skin side down for about 5 minutes or until brown and crispy.

To plate, arrange the Potato and Mushroom Sarladaise on warm plates. Add a seared duck leg to each plate and garnish with blanched peas. Spoon the glaze around the duck leg or serve in a gravy boat.

FRENCH

FROM E1 believes that's exactly what we should be doing.

When we first talked, we thought it would be good to focus on fundamentals — and is there anything more classic in French cuisine than duck confit and madeleines?

Duck confit, or *confit de canard*, is a dish straight out of Gascony. The beauty of the dish is that all pieces of the duck are used to produce it and, along with standing on its own with side dishes, it's a great addition to cassoulet, a traditional casserole of southwestern France that includes slow-cooked beans and meat.

Albouze suggested ducks that are raised cage-free and on a vegetarian grain

diet with no added antibiotics or growth hormones. The best quality duck leg, he said, should weigh just under a pound, which is especially important given that after cooking, a duck leg will lose about half its weight.

What goes well with duck confit? Albouze believes that you want primarily potatoes and porcini mushrooms, which is the larger duck confit recipe we have here.

You'll want to prepare the actual duck confit at least a day ahead of when you plan to serve it. Confit means "to preserve" in French and it's done by first curing the food in salt (Albouze prefers Celtic grey salt, which is easy to find online, including on Amazon) and then cooking it slowly over a long period in oil or fat — as opposed to

frying. It's not only an effective way to preserve foods that range from duck or other poultry to garlic but, done well, makes meat more tender and adds depth of flavor.

Here, we're using duck legs to confit in their own fat. They can be prepared either by leaving the knuckle end, as shown, or by frenching, which simply means chopping off the knuckle — a cleaver makes easy work of this — and removing the skin, cartilage and tendon from the bone for a cleaner presentation. To remove the extra tissue, you make a circular cut above the first leg joint and grab the knob firmly with a towel and give a nice pull. Save the scraps. They'll be part of what's cooked down for fat. Once that's off, trim the duck legs of as much excess fat as you can without cutting into the meat. Save those trimmings, too, to cook down for fat.

At this point, you'll brine, or salt, the duck legs with flavorings such as garlic and herbs. Once they've been in the fridge for a day, you roast the duck legs and refrigerate after that in duck fat for up to 3 weeks or freeze them. At that point, you'll reheat the legs, searing in duck fat skin-side down for 4 minutes until crispy.

The dish also includes a duck glaze, or gravy, made with either chicken or veal demi-glace (a rich brown sauce) or low-sodium chicken stock. Combine with vegetables and duck jus that's reduced by half and then blended with reduced port.

This accompanies Albouze's Potato and Mushroom Sarladaise. Traditionally, Pommes de Terre Sarladaise is made with just 3 ingredients: potatoes, garlic and fat, usually duck or goose fat. But Albouze adds thyme to brighten the dish, and persillade.

The latter is a French parsley sauce, sort of like oil-less pesto, that here is

made with parsley, shallots and garlic. You'll add this mixture first to the pan-fried potato slices and then the sauteed mushrooms.

Is there anything more classically French than a madeleine? Sort of a cross between a cookie and cake, these ridged buttery treats are notable, not just because of Proust but also for their distinct hump, which Albouze explained, is the result of chilling the batter. A chilled batter creates a temperature difference between the oven and the batter that creates a burst of steam, resulting in the hump.

Madeleines are pretty easy to make. You'll need a madeleine pan, with its ridged forms, which can be easily found online at Amazon or at stores such as Target and Walmart. And, said Albouze, you'll need a pizza stone to get the most out of the heat. The ingredients are straightforward: butter, lemon zest, eggs, sugar, all-purpose flour and baking soda. Melt the butter and add the lemon zest, then beat the eggs and sugar together, sift together the flour and baking powder, and mix all 3 components with each other before refrigerating for at least 2 hours.

Now, you can use either a pastry bag to pipe the batter into each form or just use a tablespoon, but make sure no more than an ounce goes into each form. You'll put the madeleine pan onto the pizza stone into a preheated oven and bake. When they come out of the oven, be sure to shift each cake to its side to rest in each form as it cools. Store them in a sealed container or freeze.

Golden is a San Diego freelance food writer and blogger.

ONLINE

To read the unabridged version of this story, go to sandiegouniontribune.com/lifestyle/food-and-cooking

Potato-Mushroom Sarladaise

FOR THE PERSILLADE:

1 bunch parsley, washed, drained and chopped
 3 tablespoons shallots, minced
 3 cloves garlic, minced

FOR THE POTATOES:

1½ pounds Yukon gold potatoes
 3 tablespoons duck fat (from cooked duck legs)
 Salt and pepper to taste
 3 cloves garlic, crushed
 5 sprigs thyme
 3 tablespoons persillade

FOR THE MUSHROOMS:

1.2 pounds mushroom medley, stems trimmed and saved for glaze above
 1 tablespoon duck fat (from cooked duck legs)
 3 tablespoons persillade
 Salt and pepper to taste

Make the persillade: Mix together the parsley, shallots and garlic. Refrigerate for up to 5 days.

Make the Potatoes Sarladaise: Peel the potatoes and cut into ¼-inch slices. Keep potato slices in cold water until ready to use.

Drain potatoes and pat dry. In a large skillet, heat duck fat and arrange potato slices. Season with salt and pepper. Add a couple of thyme sprigs. Lower the heat and cook for 10 minutes, covered by lid. Flip potatoes and continue to cook until golden brown. Flip again. Add 2 tablespoons of persillade and cook until fragrant, shaking the pan every so often. Keep potatoes hot until ready to serve.

Make the Mushrooms Sarladaise: Sauté trimmed mushrooms in duck fat at high heat



for about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and continue to cook for a few more minutes. Season to

taste with persillade and cook until fragrant. Lower heat and keep hot until ready to serve.



Madeleines

Madeleines are a traditional, small, shell-shape cake from the Lorraine region in northeastern France. What makes a "true" madeleine compared with other versions is the recognizable hump, the result of the batter being chilled before baking. Indeed, approximately 15 percent of the CO₂ gas is released in the cold stage. Eighty-five percent of the CO₂ gas is released in the oven. The temperature difference between the oven and the batter creates a burst of steam that results in a hump.

Makes 30 small cakes

2 sticks unsalted butter, melted
 1 tablespoon lemon zest (from about 3 lemons)
 4 large eggs
 ¾ cup white sugar
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:
 Madeleine pans
 Pizza stone

Melt butter and add lemon zest. Gently beat eggs with sugar (but do not overwork). Sift together flour and baking powder. Incorporate the sifted powders and warm butter with the egg mixture. Cover and refrigerate batter for a minimum of 2 hours.

Place oven rack and pizza stone 8 inches from the bottom of the oven. Preheat conventional oven to 500 degrees. Butter and lightly

flour nonstick madeleine pans. Shake off excess.

Fill a pastry bag with a large plain pastry cup or if using a plastic bag, cut an inch off the tip. Pipe no more than 1 ounce of batter into each madeleine form. (Alternatively, you can skip the pastry bag and use a tablespoon instead.) When the pan is filled, place it onto the hot pizza stone and bake for 5 minutes. Then lower temper-

ature to 350 degrees and continue baking for about another 5 minutes until the edges are brown.

Remove from oven and cool, moving each cookie to rest on its side in each form. Store madeleines in a sealed container, or freezer bags for a few days. Madeleines can also be kept frozen for a few weeks.

Recipes from Bruno Albouze.