



# *Duck Confit, Sweet Pepper and Fennel Tarte*

*CHEF NICHOLAS AMES*

## **Duck Confit, Sweet Pepper and Fennel Tarte**

(Serves 4)

2 lbs duck legs, or substitute chicken thighs	4 cups rendered duck fat, lard or oil, or a combination
2 tbsp Kosher salt	1 tsp olive oil
4 cloves (whole)	½ lb sweet peppers, or substitute red bell pepper
1 tbsp black peppercorns (whole)	1 fennel bulb
3 garlic cloves (peeled and sliced)	4 tbsp crème fraîche or sour cream
3 bay leaves	2 egg yolks
	1 puff pastry sheet (premade), cut into 4 (5" x 6") squares

1. Sprinkle the duck legs all over with the salt and put them in a non-reactive container. Roughly crush the cloves and peppercorns with the side of a knife and scatter evenly over the duck. Press some sliced garlic onto each duck leg. Break the bay leaves in half and press a half-leaf onto each piece of duck. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight, or for up to 48 hours.
3. Rinse the duck under cold water, wiping off all the seasonings. Pat dry.
4. Preheat the oven to 180 to 200 degrees F (depending on how low you can set it).
5. Place the duck legs in a pot; a 6-quart stockpot or a Dutch oven. The legs can be in one layer or two layers; the only critical factor is that you have enough fat to completely cover the duck. Cover the legs with fat and bring to a simmer on the stove top over medium-high heat. Then place, uncovered, in the oven and cook for 6 hours, or until the meat is falling off the bone, up to 10 hours.
6. When the duck is cooked, remove the duck from the oven and cool to room temperature in the pot, then refrigerate. Use immediately or store covered in the refrigerator for up to a month. For any extended storage, make sure the duck is completely covered by fat or oil. Once ready to use, remove the meat from the fat, remove the skin and shred the duck meat using caution to remove any bones. Once shredded, reserve.
7. For final preparation, in a large sauté pan add about 1 tsp of olive oil and sauté the whole peppers over high heat until slightly charred on one side. Place in the oven at low temperature for 5-10 minutes. The peppers can be served slightly raw or fully cooked. Once the peppers are done, remove them from the oven and allow them to cool. Once cooled, trim, slice to ¼ inch thickness and reserve.
8. Using a sharp knife or a mandolin, slice the fennel as thin as possible. Once sliced, place in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Let sit in the bowl for at least 1 hour tossing the fennel occasionally to maintain an even seasoning.
9. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees F. For the puff pastry, beat the egg yolks together. Use a nonstick baking sheet or cover any baking sheet with a piece of parchment paper. Arrange the squares of pastry on the sheet. Leaving a half inch of the pastry exposed on the edge, cover each with a 1/4 portion of the sliced fennel, crème fraîche, the sliced peppers and finally the shredded duck meat. Brush the exposed pastry with the egg yolk. Bake until the pastry is nicely browned, about 15 minutes. Serve hot, with a glass of Brian Carter Cellars Byzance.