

PLUM-GLAZED DUCK BREASTS

(from Fine Cooking magazine, October 2011)

2 boneless, skin-on duck breast halves
Kosher salt and black pepper
1/2 cup plum preserves
1 Tbs. soy sauce
1/4 tsp. Chinese five-spice powder
Pinch crushed red pepper flakes

Heat the oven to 425°F. Trim any excess skin and fat from the duck breast and, using a very sharp knife, score the skin and fat underneath in a 1-inch diamond pattern. Be careful not to cut all the way through the flesh, you want to just get the layer of fat underneath the skin to be exposed, so the fat renders more efficiently. Pat the duck dry and season with salt and pepper.

Heat an oven-proof skillet over medium-high heat. Put the duck in the skillet skin side down, reduce the heat to medium low, and render the fat until only a thin, crisp layer of skin remains. It will take 8 to 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the preserves, soy sauce, five-spice powder, and red pepper flakes. Remove the duck to a platter, pour most of the fat off the skillet, and return the filets to the pan, skin side up. Brush the preserves mixture over the breasts. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a breast registers 135°F for medium rare, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer the duck to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes. Heat the remaining plum mixture briefly, slice the duck diagonally and spoon the pan juice over.

ENJOY!