Will You Have Duck or Squirrel?...

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Will You Have Duck or Squirrel? . . .

By Virginia Rowe

Here's How to Cook Either

ONE of the most prominent foods in our holiday menu is certainly wild game. The wild duck, pheasant, quail, partridge and rabbits and squirrels are plentiful right here in our own state, while the wild turkey and venison are shipped in from our friends who travel for their hunting.

Some of us were discussing our mothers' favorite ways of preparing game and unusual meats the other night, and do you know that there was a much larger variety of dishes than it seemed possible? Maybe you'd like to know a few of the best sounding ones.

Roast leg of venison sounded very good. So if you are able to obtain venison why not try it? Wipe the venison carefully and draw off the dry skin. Lard the lean side with strips of pork. Soften butter and rub over the meat. Then season and flour it. Place the leg on the rack of your baking pan, sprinkle bottom of pan with flour, and place in a very hot oven. Watch carefully until the flour in the pan is browned. (This should be in about 5 minutes.) Add some boiling water to cover the bottom of the pan. Baste every 15 minutes until done. Allow about 10 minutes to the pound for medium done meat. Serve this with the gravy and a tart jelly, such as currant.

Maybe you'd prefer broiled venison steak, though! If you would, wipe the meat with a damp cloth, and place on a broiler. Sear in a very hot oven until it is as brown as desired. Then turn down the gas and continue cooking for approximately the same length of time that you use for broiled beefsteak.

If you aren't fortunate enough to have someone send venison, you will probably enjoy your wild ducks just as much. Since they have a rather flabby flavor, something should be used to lessen it. Some of the suggestions were to place a small peeled carrot, onion or an apple on the inside of each fowl. If onion is used, it is usually preferred in the dressing. When the ducks are very young parboiling may be objectionable, but otherwise it is suggested that 10 or 15 minutes of simmering will improve the flavor. For very young ducks it was suggested that they be rubbed lightly with an onion cut in two, and that several uncooked cranberries are good inside.

Wild duck may be served with lemon and brown gravy, or with an orange and olive sauce. They are usually cooked rare, and are seldom stuffed for roasting.

Since Mallard ducks are unusually dry, they are prepared in a slightly different manner. They may be stuffed with bread dressing, sewed up, tied in shape, and placed in a large kettle with a couple of slices of onion, a little thyme, and a small quantity of water. Cook slowly for one hour, turning often. Use only enough water to replenishing to prevent burning. Make gravy from the juices, and pour over the ducks.

PEHASANT, partridge and quail may be prepared similarly. If the birds are young and small, many people prefer broiling to any other method. They may be split down the back, seasoned, and placed on the broiler with the inside to the fire. It takes about 10 minutes for quail and 25 to 40 minutes for partridge and pheasant. When done, serve with drawn butter sauce.

If you prefer them panned, I have a delicious method to suggest. Cut into pieces, as for frying chicken. Dredge with flour and brown in very hot fat. When sufficiently brown, place in roaster, cover about half with milk, and bake until tender. Serve with the gravy made by flour and milk.

Since grouse are very dry, it is suggested that they be larded before roasting. One way to do this is to cover them completely with bacon. When cooked thoroughly, brush birds with oil, melted butter or a substitute, dredge with flour and place in oven to brown. The liquid may be thickened and served as gravy.

Quail may be stuffed with one large oyster in each bird. Lard breast and legs, and bake as for larded grouse.

If rabbits are young enough, they may be roasted or broiled. But usually ours are of an indefinite age and are better when prepared in casseroles or in a salmi. For the casserole, make a gravy of 3 tablespoons of fat, 4 tablespoons of flour, 1 teaspoon of salt, and ¼ teaspoon of pepper. Pour over previously cut up and browned rabbit. Bake until tender. Serve with a tart jelly.

The recipe for the rabbit, or hare, salmi follows:

1 hare
1 slice onion
1 teaspoon salt
1 stalk celery
1 bay leaf
1 slice onion
2 tablespoons oil
1 cup water
2 tablespoons butter
2 cups water
1 tablespoon capers
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 cup water
1 tablespoon capers
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Clean and dress hare. Place in a baking pan. Add onion, celery and bay leaf. Brush with oil and cook 30 minutes. Lift meat from pan, add butter and flour and stir until a rich brown. Add hot water, stir well, and when smooth add salt, Worcestershire sauce, capers and olives. Lay meat again in pan. Cover closely and simmer for 30 minutes. Dish game on platter. Strain sauce over meat, arrange the olives as a garnish and sprinkle with finely chopped parsley. Serve immediately.

And here's something you can all have! Roast squirrel! Marinate the squirrel in vinegar and oil for one hour. Stuff with dressing of one cup bread crumbs in enough cream to moisten, and one cup button mushrooms, cut fine and seasoned. Rub in oil and partially cover with brown stock diluted with water. Roast until tender. Make gravy of the liquor in the pan by adding one teaspoon of Worcestershire, paprika, salt and lemon juice to taste.

Here's wishing you a Merry Christmas and plenty of roast duck or squirrel to go with it!