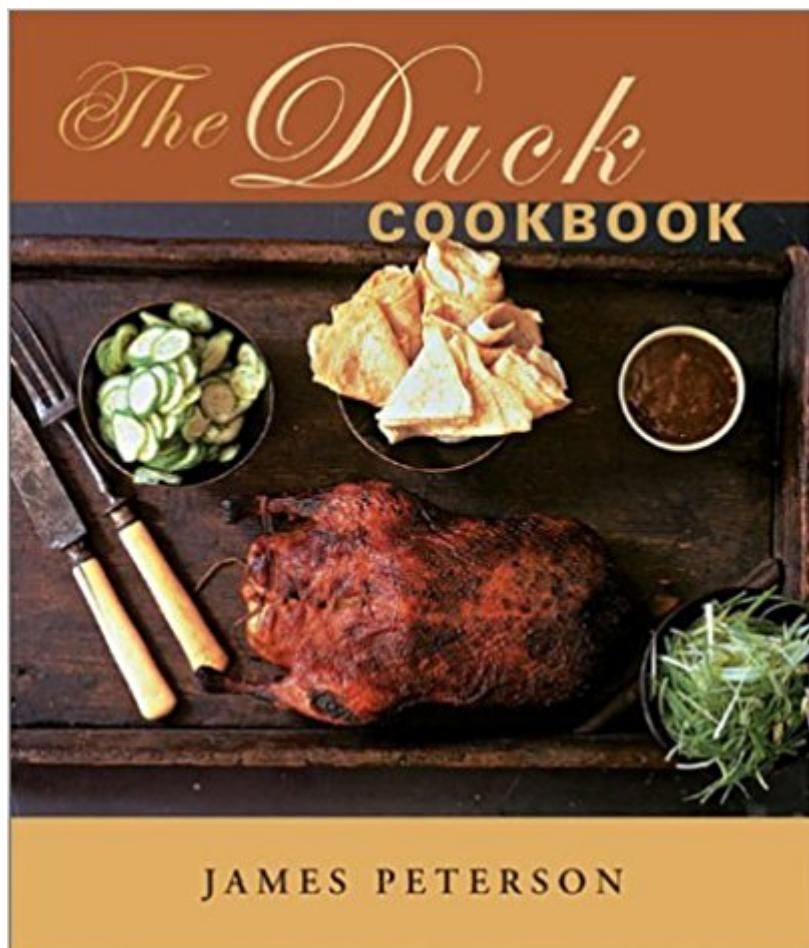


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The Duck Cookbook



Synopsis

Nearly everyone enjoys eating duck, but the prospect of cooking it at home can intimidate even the most accomplished home chef. James Peterson comes to the rescue with a complete guide explaining the varieties of duck, the best cooking method for each part of it, and recipes that will make duck both an elegant treat and a mainstay of any cook's repertoire. Peterson organizes the chapters by methods and techniques - from sauteing to smoking - before moving on to chapters on duck soups, salads, and confit. This practical setup ensures that the reader has the proper knowledge to successfully execute each dish and eliminates the mystery surrounding the preparation of duck. Sidebars full of useful information such as how to render duck fat and recipes for classic French sauces for duck breasts are an added bonus. Dishes range from simple Sauteed Duck Breasts to Whole Roast Duck to sophisticated terrines and mousses. Highlights include Braised Duck Legs with Red Cabbage and Juniper Berries, Duck Confit Spring Rolls, and Pappardelle with Duck Sauce.

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Customer Reviews

The title tells it all. This book is all about cooking duck using most techniques common to other types of meats plus at least one which is unique to duck and other fatty fowl. The nine techniques / preparations chapters are: Sauteing, Braising, Roasting, Confit - a French cooking and preservation method unique, I believe, to ducks and geese, Smoking, Curing, Soups, Salads, Terrines and Mousses. It's interesting that while poaching is a common cooking technique for chicken, the technique is not included here for duck. This technique is largely replaced by the confit method. This is just one clue

to the fact that a duck is different from a chicken and methods which work for one will not work for the other. The biggest difference is the level of fat in a duck's skin (but not in it's meat). This is simply due to the fact that ducks can fly and chickens cannot and ducks spend a lot of time in the water. This also explains why almost all duck meat is dark, more similar to a chicken's legs than to it's breast meat. The difference between ducks and chickens is the main thing which makes this book valuable in itself, especially since many of the techniques appear to be unique to duck cookery. A second great value to the book is that it spells out the right way to cook to avoid fatty flesh if your primary interest is to avoid the saturated fat without loosing out on the great taste of duck. Aside from the confit method, one of the best values derived from duck is the high quality of the broth one can make from duck, in many ways as valuable and as flavorful as stocks derived from veal. The only drawback is that to make a decent amount of duck broth, you need 12 carcasses or equivalent amount of leftover pieces.

I've never met a duck I didn't like. If a restaurant has duck on the menu, that's the item I'll order. So buying a copy of *The Duck Cookbook* by James Petersen (I have several of his other cookbooks) was never really in question. What's surprising is that it took me years, YEARS to actually cook something from it. Initially, I expected several variations on roast duck, smoked duck, etc. But Petersen actually has few recipes for a whole bird. He found that since the breast is generally overcooked by the time the legs are cooked, most recipes are for duck breasts or duck legs or duck in pieces. That could work fine if I had an easy-to-get-to source for duck parts, but the local supermarkets (even the gourmet stores) sell a whole duck frozen for a not-too-unreasonable price, or they sell small packages of (usually frozen) duck breasts for prices that take my breath away. Unless I'm ready to take a trip to the Chinese market downtown (where duck costs little more than does chicken -- which darnit is as it SHOULD be), I have few opportunities to buy, say, 6 duck legs. This slowed down my opportunity to cook from *The Duck Cookbook*, though not my appreciation. The recipes are great -- or at least they seem so. Chapters are devoted to sauteing, braising, roasting, confit, smoking, curing, soups, salads, and terrines and mousses. They range from simple techniques (sautéed duck breasts) to elaborate variations (duck breast with blueberries, or duck breasts with chihuacle negro chiles, raisins, and almonds). There's plenty of recipes for items that use duck as an ingredient, such as hot-and-sour soup with duck (really, why haven't I made this already?!?) or duck bouillabaisse.

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