Main dishes / France

Confit de Canard

Duck legs cured overnight in salt, then submerged in their own rendered fat and cooked at a barely trembling temperature until the collagen dissolves and the meat is silky and almost boneless. Crisped in a screaming-hot pan before serving, the skin shatters.

Time 1080 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- [ ] 4 pieces Duck legs (whole, skin-on)
- [ ] 800 g Duck fat
- [ ] 25 g Coarse sea salt
- [ ] 6 sprigs Fresh thyme sprigs
- [ ] 3 leaves Bay leaves
- [ ] 6 cloves Garlic cloves, lightly crushed

Let's make it.

01 Score the duck skin in a crosshatch pattern with a sharp knife, cutting through the fat but not into the meat. Rub each leg all over with coarse salt, then press thyme, bay, and garlic against the skin. Stack in a non-reactive container, cover, and refrigerate for 12–24 hours. The salt will draw moisture from the skin, concentrating flavour and improving the final crispness.

02 Melt the duck fat in a deep, heavy pot. Pat the rinsed duck legs completely dry. Submerge them fully in the fat — add more fat if needed to cover. Heat until the fat reaches 80–90 C (175–195 F). Maintain this temperature in a 90 C (195 F) oven for 6–8 hours. The fat should show only the most occasional lazy bubble — a trembling rather than a simmer. At this temperature, the collagen converts to gelatin without the muscle fibers seizing up.

03 Remove the duck legs from the fat (reserving all fat for storage and future cooking). Pat the skin completely dry with paper towels. Heat an oven-safe pan over high heat until smoking. Place the duck legs skin-side down with no additional fat. Press gently to ensure full skin contact. Sear for 4–6 minutes without moving until the skin is deeply golden-brown and crackling audibly. Transfer to a 220 C (430 F) oven skin-side up for 5 more minutes to heat through.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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