



Terrine of Foie Gras with Mulled Plums & Gingered Pears

[Chef Donna's Note: The key to a successful terrine is removing any unsightly veins or blemishes from the liver and cooking it very gently at a low temperature in a water bath. First-quality grade-A livers are the only choice for terrines, because of their pristine appearance and composition. Making and serving a homemade foie gras terrine is a luxury to be relished by both the cook and her guests.]

Serves 8 to 10

Ingredients:

1 grade-A duck foie gras
2 tsp kosher salt
3 Tbsp white port or Sauternes
Mulled Plums and Gingered Pears (recipes follow)

Preparation:

Let the foie gras sit at room temperature for 1 hour. Separate the larger lobe from the smaller one by gently pulling them apart. Place the smooth side of the foie gras on the counter. Find the spot in the larger lobe where the veins surface. With a small paring knife, pry the foie gras open and follow the major veins into the liver. Remove the veins from the liver, by pulling gently, using small kitchen pliers if necessary. Take care not to break up the liver too much. Scrape any red blemishes from the liver. Pat dry with a towel. Repeat with the smaller lobe.

Place the liver, smooth-side down, in a bowl or dish just large enough to hold it. Season with salt and white port or Sauternes. Press plastic wrap on the surface of the liver and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 200° F. Remove the foie gras from the refrigerator 20 minutes before cooking. Place the smaller lobe, smooth-side down, in a small terrine mold. Place any broken bits on the top and then cover with the larger lobe, smooth-side up. Press the liver in the mold to make sure it is compact.

Line a medium roasting pan with paper towels. Place the terrine in the pan and pour hot water halfway up the side of the mold. Cover the mold with a lid or aluminum foil. Bake for 40 minutes, or until a thermometer inserted into the foie gras registers between 115° and 120° F. Check for doneness after 30 minutes. Remove the terrine from the oven and water bath. Let cool at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Leaving about ¼ to ½ inch of fat on the surface, pour the excess fat from the terrine and reserve. Cut a piece of cardboard the size of the opening of the terrine mold and wrap it in plastic wrap. Place it on the surface of the terrine and place a 16-ounce can on top to weight the terrine. Refrigerate for at least 48 hours or up to 1 week.

The foie gras can be served from the mold or be unmolded. To serve slices, unmold the terrine and trim it if needed. With a warm knife, cut the foie gras into slices. To present it in the terrine, pour some melted, reserved fat on the surface and refrigerate until set. Score the surface of the terrine with a knife. Serve the foie gras by scooping it out of the terrine with a warm spoon. If not eating all of the terrine at one time, store it well wrapped in plastic wrap for up to one week after cooking. Serve with the drained poached fruit.

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Mulled Plums

Makes about 2 cups

Ingredients:

1½ cups ruby port
½ cup water
2 Tbsp honey
4 whole cloves
2 peppercorns
½ cinnamon stick
12 ounces plums, peeled

Preparation:

In a medium saucepan, combine all of the ingredients except the plums. Bring to a simmer and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes.

Drop the plums into the spiced liquid, reduce the heat to very low, and poach the plums until tender, 25 to 30 minutes. Do not let the liquid boil, or the fruit will be mushy. Let cool in the liquid and set aside until ready to use.

Gingered Pears

Serves 4 to 6 as a garnish

Ingredients:

1½ cups white verjus (available at specialty food stores)
½ cup honey
4 slices fresh ginger
6 allspice berries
8 small, firm pears (sekel, forelle or small reds) peeled, stems intact

Preparation:

In a medium saucepan, combine all of the ingredients except the pears. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat to low, and cook for 5 minutes.

Drop the pears into the spiced liquid. Reduce the heat to very low and poach the fruit until tender and not mushy, about 30 minutes. Be careful not to boil the pears. Set aside and let cool in the liquid.

*Adapted from Caviar, Truffles, and Foie Gras: Recipes for Divine Indulgence, by Katherine Alford.
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