

Foie Gras au Torchon / Mi-Cuit / Semi-Cooked Recipe / Serves 12.

Foie au torchon can be served with many sweet preparations such as figs, chestnut preserve, roasted fruits and prunes, poached pear, orange marmalade, pickled cherries, mango, cooked apple or sorbet, port reduction, balsamic reduction, toasted brioche or baguette or multi-fruit bread or country bread etc.. I tried my slice of foie gras with a dash of lemon confit (See video Lemon Confit), fleur de sel or grey salt and ground pepper; simply delicious.

1 whole lobe of duck foie gras - grade A or B (about 1.5lb./ 700g) It can be purchased from Hudson Valley Foie Gras.

2 tsp (8g) kosher salt

1 tsp (4g) pink salt or curing-salt (it prevents the liver from turning brown)

1/4 tsp (1g) sugar

1/4 tsp (1g) freshly white ground pepper for cosmetic reasons but black pepper works fine

1.5 Tbsp (22ml) Armagnac or aged white port.

4 qt (4L) water, chicken or veal stock.



Method

The torchon is formed by placing the seasoned foie gras on two large layers of cheesecloth and wrapping it into a tight cylinder, then poaching it for less than 2 minutes. It's a 3 days making process. Once made it can be refrigerated up to 8 days.

First, soak the foie gras in salted water (1ounce/30g) kosher salt per gallon / 4L, or milk at room temperature for at least two hours. This will temper the foie gras, making it easier to manipulate as you remove the veins. Inspect the surface and remove visible bruises or blemishes. The ideal internal temperature of the liver should be around: 65°F (18°C). Carefully remove liver from water or milk and drain over paper towels.

To clean foie gras

Pull apart the two lobes. Remove any membranes from the outside of the foie gras. Start by butterflying the large lobe (thinner part against you). Slice through the lobe to the vein holding your knife at a 45-degree angle, following its path and pulling foie gras apart. You will notice the vein clearly. Make a surface cut at each side of the vein to butterfly the lobe and scrape far enough with the tip of your knife to open the folds and expose the network of the veins leaving the outer skin of the foie gras intact. First, pull out the smaller network of veins located right above the thickest veins using the tip of a knife and your fingertips then continue down where all the thickest veins are and carefully pull them out. Try to remove as much of the vein network in one piece as possible. There are smaller veins throughout the liver that should be removed as well; the more refined the finished product will be. It does not really matter how much you cut and scrape the inside, you'll be able to reform the lobe. Once cleaned, fold over the sides to return to its original shape.

For the small lobe

Repeat the same procedure by following the line of the primary vein. Make a slit with your knife and butterfly the lobe with your fingers and knife pulling the lobe open. The vein should show up. As with the large lobe, scrape and remove any veins and form it back to its original shape. Save and pass all veins through a fine mesh sieve and set aside.

To Marinate

Overlap two large layers of plastic wrap over the countertop and sprinkle half of the seasoning ingredients which are kosher salt, pink salt, sugar and white ground pepper. Arrange the deveined room temperature foie gras on the seasoned plastic wrap and add the remaining seasoning and the alcohol. Roll firmly into a log and refrigerate for 12 hours.

Shaping

Foie gras log can be re-wrapped into plastic film instead of cheesecloth. It will end up lightly coated with its own fat since the hot water won't go through. Follow the same procedure but poach in water only.

Remove foie gras from the refrigerator 30 minutes before reshaping it. Line two large pieces of cheesecloth (30x20 inch/75x50cm) or use a large white torchon (fragrance-free kitchen towel) on the countertop. Unwrap the foie gras, discard the plastic wrap and place it along a short end of the cheesecloth. Rolling it away from you, roll it up in the cheesecloth into a tight cylinder twisting and pressing one end first as you roll to force the foie gras into a compact log. At this juncture, hold one end of the cheesecloth tightly and wind the string around the end and tie a knot. Continue rolling the log from the other side to compress into a very tight log until you'll see bits of foie gras being forced through the cheesecloth. At this juncture your foie gras is at room temperature and it can be poached right away but it would have to be reshaped into its original form after cooking. If you want to skip this reshaping step; refrigerate the log 12 more hours or until it has completely hardened and poach it. The torchon will keep its original shape and less fat will be wasted.

Poaching

Bring water or stock to a simmer. Carefully immerse the foie gras au torchon in the simmering liquid and poach for 90 seconds. Transfer immediately the torchon to an ice-water bath to cool. Once chilled and hard enough, remove from ice-water twisting the ends of the cheesecloth. Hang the foie gras from a shelf in the refrigerator overnight or on a baking tray lined with sheets of paper towels. Just before serving, remove the cheesecloth. The outside of the foie gras should be grey and oxidized. Cut the ends from the log and slice into 3/4 inch (2cm) using a sharp knife dipped in hot water, reheat knife before cutting the next slice. In the restaurant business you want to use a round cutter slightly smaller than the slice to cut away the darkened exterior of the torchon. However, it is perfectly fine to serve as is at home.

Bon appétit!

