

Pan Seared Ruffed Grouse with Cherry Reduction



The season is here. The hunters are almost as restless as the dogs, the fall colors are starting to show, and that fragrance of autumn is in the air. The Ruffed Grouse is affectionately heralded as “The King of Gamebirds,” and for good reason. Ole Ruff in the north woods is arguably the most difficult bird to put in one’s bag. Traversing their habitat can be brutal, visibility is almost always a challenge, and they have earned the nickname “thunder chicken” for the way they explode into flight when flushed.

While bagging a ruffed grouse is a reward in its own right, as table fare, they are phenomenal. It’s important to carefully monitor the grouse when cooking it, exceeding 160 degrees Fahrenheit can make for a dry piece of meat, and that is no way to treat “The King.” This recipe is simple and classy. The cherry reduction adds a wonderful element and accentuates the flavor of the dish. Good luck in the coverts and enjoy this excellent recipe.

Cherry Reduction Ingredients:

- 1 – Cup of fresh pitted cherries
- 2 – Tablespoons of sugar
- 2 – Tablespoons of water
- 1 – Tablespoon of softened butter
- 1 – Teaspoon of cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

First mix the cornstarch and water very well. Next mix the cornstarch/water slurry with the rest of the ingredients in a saucepan and place over medium heat. Bring the sauce to a boil then reduce the heat to simmer. Simmer for ten minutes, then remove to allow the sauce to cool.



Main Ingredients:

- 4 – Ruffed Grouse Breast Halves
- 2 – Tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 – Tablespoons of butter
- 2 – Cups of dried cherries
- 2 – Heads of artisan Romaine lettuce
- 8 ounces – Goat cheese crumbles

DIRECTIONS

Pre-heat a quality searing pan to a medium temperature. While the pan is heating up, gently salt and pepper both sides of the grouse breasts (not too much, ruffed grouse has a gentle flavor that can be overpowered). Next, add the olive oil then the butter. (The olive oil will keep the butter from burning at higher heat). Once the butter has melted, place your grouse breasts in the hot pan for

roughly three minutes on the first side, then flip and repeat. (There is no shame in using a meat thermometer) You’ll want to cook the breasts to an internal temperature of 150 to 160 degrees, but no more. When the breasts have been seared perfectly on both sides and have reached 150 degrees, remove them to a cutting board to rest while preparing the rest of the dish.

Take your washed heads of Romaine lettuce and chop perpendicular to the leaf so that you end up with roughly ¾ inch wide strips. Lay a bed of lettuce on each of the four plates. Next add 2 ounces of goat cheese to the top of the lettuce along with a small pile of dried cherries.

Finally, slice the grouse breasts and plate on top of the lettuce, adjacent to the cherries and goat cheese. Drizzle the cherry reduction over the grouse breast and enjoy. 🍴

