Peaceful Retreats • Easy Ornaments • Winter Walks



Our Favorite Cookies

We picked the 20 best reader recipes



AOL Keyword: Sunset
\$4.50US/\$5.50CAN
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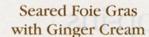
The holidays at home around the West

Foie gras fact and fancy

Once a rarity, foie gras is now on even moderately upscale menus. And ducks are being reared in this country for their fat, oversize livers (foie gras de canard, in French). Prepared at home, foie gras is a relative bargain. A whole duck foie gras weighs 1 to 11/2 pounds, and 3 ounces makes a generous firstcourse serving. Polarica in San Francisco (800/426-3872 or www. polarica.com) ships whole livers (grade A, \$35 to \$38 per lb.; grade B, about \$30 per lb.—both are fine for sautéing). At an upscale meat market or fancy food store, the price is higher, but you can usually buy a portion of a liver.

A whole liver has two lobes. To clean them, gently pull them apart and pull or trim out any veins. To sauté foie gras, keep it cold until ready to cook, cut it into fairly thick slices, and then sear it quickly over high heat to brown lightly.

Foie gras is so lavishly rich, it tastes best with powerful beverage partners, such as an intensely sweet, high-acid French Sauternes or a late-harvest white wine.



PREP AND COOK TIME: 30 minutes

NOTES: Order fresh duck foie gras at least 1 week ahead. To assemble this dish easily, slice the foie gras up to 1 day ahead; arrange in a single layer on a plate and chill airtight. Also make the sauce up to 1 day ahead; cover and chill, then reheat to use, whisking in a little more whipping cream if too thick.

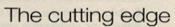
MAKES: 4 to 6 first-course servings

- 11/2 tablespoons chopped crystallized ginger
 - 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh ginger
 - 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sherry vinegar About 3/4 cup whipping cream
- 4 to 6 slices firm-textured egg or white bread, toasted, crusts trimmed
- piece (2/3 to 1 lb.) chilled fresh duck foie gras, rinsed and patted dry (see notes)
 - Coarse salt and fresh-ground pepper
- 8 to 12 fresh chive spears, rinsed
- 1. In a blender, whirl crystallized ginger, fresh ginger, brown sugar, and vinegar until ginger is minced. Pour into a 2- to 3-quart pan and add 3/4 cup cream. Stir over high heat until boiling, then stir often until reduced to about 3/4 cup, 8 to 10 minutes; keep warm.



- 2. On each salad plate, lay a slice of toast; keep warm up to 10 minutes in a 150° to 200° oven.
- 3. With a hot thin-bladed, sharp knife (heat in hot water or over a burner), cut foie gras across narrow dimension into 1/2-inch-thick slices; wipe knife clean after each cut and heat again. Sprinkle slices lightly with salt and pepper.
- 4. Place a 10- to 12-inch nonstick frying pan over high heat; when it's hot enough for a drop of water to bounce off the surface, quickly lay foie gras slices in pan, filling it without crowding. Cook foie gras just until lightly browned on the bottom, 15 to 45 seconds, then turn slices and brown other sides (interiors will be warm, not hot), 15 to 45 seconds. Remove pan from heat, and with a wide spatula, quickly transfer equal portions of foie gras to toast; spoon fat in pan evenly over toast. Ladle ginger sauce equally around portions and garnish with chive spears.

Nutritional data is not available.



A good knife is the making of a cook; a beautiful knife is a cook's joy. The culinary knives handcrafted by Corey Milligan and Michael Merriman of New West KnifeWorks take an aesthetic step beyond the making of a cook. The blades are keen-edged, high-carbon, surgical stainless steel. The handles, however, are not standard black but layered with colors—hardwood veneers, vacuum-impregnated with wood hues or vivid dyes, then bound for strength and durability under heat and intense pressure.

The selection from New West includes 6- and 8-inch chef's knives (\$69) and \$95, respectively), a 10-inch bread knife (\$85), a cleaver (\$125), a paring knife (\$37.50), and carving (\$179) and steak knives (\$245 for a sixpiece set). The handles come in eight different color combinations; holders are also available. (877) 258-0100 or www.newwestknifeworks.com.

