SMOKED · MEDIUM

Kamado-Smoked Duck with Apples (Utka s Yablokami), Orange-Wood Smoke

The celebration duck of the Russian repertoire, stuffed with sharp apples and given three hours on the kamado at 130-140 °C, with orange-wood chips fed from a smoker box. The fat drips into the tray and ends up on the potatoes.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
40 min	200 min	4	135 °C

Ingredients

- **2.3 kg** whole duck, dressed, giblets removed
- **1 cdta** freshly ground black pepper
- **3 ud** garlic cloves, crushed
- **80 g** stoned prunes
- **2 ud** bay leaves
- **300 g** sauerkraut or pickled red cabbage, to serve
- **30 g** coarse salt
- **1 cdta** dried marjoram (or thyme)
- **700 g** sharp apples (Granny Smith or reineta, a Spanish Reinette), quartered and cored
- **0.5 ud** lemon, juice only
- **800 g** medium potatoes, peeled and halved

Method

1 DRY-SALT THE DUCK

The day before, pat the duck dry inside and out with kitchen paper and prick the skin over the breast and thighs with the tip of a knife, skin only, without reaching the meat: those holes are where the rendered fat escapes. Mix the salt, pepper, marjoram and crushed garlic and rub the bird all over and inside the cavity. Leave it uncovered in the fridge for 12-24 hours on a rack so the skin dries out.

2 STUFF WITH APPLES

Toss the apple quarters in the lemon juice so they do not brown and mix them with the prunes and the bay leaves. Fill the cavity loosely: the apples swell and release juice as they cook, and a packed stuffing will not reach 74 °C in time. Close the opening with two or three toothpicks and tie the legs with kitchen string so the duck sits compact on the grate. Any quarters that do not fit are set aside and go into the tray with the potatoes in step 7.

3 LIGHT THE KONNECTED JOE

Fill the firebox with BlackSellig coconut briquettes and light it with the Kamado Joe Konnected Joe's built-in electric igniter. Fit the two deflector plates that come with the kamado, set the drip tray with a finger of water on just one of the two halves and the two half grates above: the half without the tray stays free to reach the coals. Close the dome and settle at 130-140 °C with the bottom vent barely open.

4 LOAD THE SMOKER BOX

Once the air is steady, load the La Cuisine smoker box with dry BWAY orange-wood chips and close it. With gloves, lift the half grate and the half deflector plate on the side without the tray and set the box on the briquettes, at the edge of the bed. Put plate and grate back. That free half is the one you will open at every reload without touching duck or tray. Loading it earlier, over young coals, wastes the first batch as acrid smoke in an empty chamber.

5 PLACE THE PROBES AND THE DUCK

Insert three probes of the Inkbird IBT-4XS: one in the thick part of the thigh clear of the bone, another in the centre of the breast, the third in the heart of the stuffing. Fix the fourth to the grate with a generic probe clip, a few centimetres from the bird. Set the duck breast up on the half grate that sits over the tray, keeping clear of the other half, close the dome and set the alarms to 74 °C on the three meat probes and 145 °C on the air probe.

6 SMOKE IN BATCHES

When the box stops giving off bluish smoke, reload it: with gloves and tongs, lift out the free half of the grate and the half deflector plate beneath it (duck and tray stay on the other half), add another handful of dry chips to the box, close it and put everything back. Two or three reloads over the first two hours are enough; after that the skin has taken on all the smoke it is going to take. Keep the air between 130 and 140 °C by touching only the top vent.

7 POTATOES INTO THE TRAY

While the duck smokes, boil the potatoes in salted water for 10 minutes from the boil and drain them. When the thigh probe reads 60-62 °C, lift the half grate with the duck on it out with gloves and rest it on a board, take out the tray, pour off any water left, spread the potatoes and the reserved apple in the fat, turn them and put tray and duck back. In the time the duck has left, they confit without browning; the colour comes in the next step.

8 RAISE TO 190-200 °C AND PULL AT 74 °C

With the thigh at 64-66 °C, open both vents until the air reaches 190-200 °C, without removing the deflectors or the tray, and move the air-probe alarm up to 210 °C. The skin crisps and the potatoes brown in the fat. Take the duck out when thigh, breast and stuffing all read 74 °C; on a 2.3 kg bird the total comes to about three hours, but the probe decides. Leave the potatoes in for 10 more minutes if they need colour.

9 REST AND CARVE

Move the duck to a board and rest it for 20 minutes, uncovered, so the skin does not soften in the steam. Remove the toothpicks and spoon the stuffing into a bowl: the apples are by now a spiced compote with the prunes. Carve into drumsticks, thighs and sliced breasts, and serve with the potatoes from the tray, the apple compote and the cold sauerkraut alongside, which cuts through the fat.

Editor's tips

- Prick only the skin, not the meat: the holes drain the subcutaneous fat, but if they go through the muscle the breast loses juice and dries out before the thigh reaches 74 °C.
- If the Granny Smiths are very green, use half Granny Smith and half reineta: the reineta breaks down more and gives the compote body, while the Granny Smith keeps the acidity that balances the fat.
- Strain the fat left in the tray and keep it in a jar in the fridge: it is orange-smoked duck fat, good for potatoes, confits or frying a couple of eggs another day.
- Set the smoker box at the edge of the charcoal bed, not in the centre: it takes less heat, the chips burn down more slowly and each load smokes for longer without the wood catching.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Joe Konnected Joe

The Konnected Joe solves two of this recipe's problems without buying a separate deflector or igniter. It includes the deflector plates of Kamado Joe's grate system as standard, and those are what turn the charcoal into indirect heat and let you put a drip tray between the coals and the duck: without them, the bird's fat falls into the fire and burns. And its built-in electric igniter saves firelighters and waiting on a cook that already lasts three hours. The two halves of the deflector lift out separately, so reloading the smoker box on the coals takes a minute without dismantling the whole grate. The ceramic holds a steady 130-140 °C with the vents almost closed, which is exactly what a long smoke of a bird asks for.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-joe-konnected-joe

BlackSellig XXL Pure Coconut Charcoal Briquettes 10 kg

When smoking, the base fuel should give heat, not flavour: the aroma has to come from the wood alone. BlackSellig's coconut-shell briquettes are a neutral fuel, with little smoke of their own and little ash, and their uniform XXL format burns even and long, just what a three-hour cook at 130-140 °C needs without topping up the charcoal. On a bed of holm oak lump charcoal the orange wood would have to compete with the smoke of the charcoal's own wood; on coconut, the chips in the smoker box are the only thing perfuming the dome. The low ash output also helps keep the bottom vent from clogging over a long cook.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/blacksellig-coconut-shell-10kg

BWAY Legna Tris: olive, orange and almond smoking chips (3×400 ml)

The BWAY trio brings three Mediterranean woods as chips, olive, orange and almond, and this recipe uses the orange: sweet, slightly citrussy smoke that accompanies the apple stuffing instead of smothering it, as oak or hickory would over three hours of cooking. The fine-chip format is the right one for a smoker box: they go in dry, no soaking, and without free oxygen they char slowly rather than burn. The three 400 ml tubs give you several batches and leave olive and almond for other birds or for a fish. These are woods that grow on the Costa Blanca, and orange smoke is the one that smells of this part of the world.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/maderas-ahumar-olivo-naranjo-almendro-bway

La Cuisine Stainless Steel Smoker Box with Slotted Lid

Fine chips cannot be thrown loose onto the coals: they flare up and give dirty smoke for a minute. The La Cuisine smoker box, stainless steel with a slotted lid, acts as a regulator. Loaded with dry chips and closed, it sits directly on the lit briquettes, below the deflector, not on the grate; the wood, starved of oxygen, chars slowly and releases a thin smoke through the slots in the lid. When it stops smoking you open it, refill it and close it again, so the smoke is fed in batches instead of dumping all the wood at once at the start. Stainless steel stands up to contact with the coals and cleans up with a brush.

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Inkbird IBT-4XS Bluetooth thermometer

A whole stuffed duck has three different temperatures to watch at once, and the air at grate level is the fourth. The Inkbird IBT-4XS comes with four probes, and here all of them are used: thigh, breast, centre of the stuffing, and ambient, held on the grate with a probe clip. The Bluetooth app lets you watch all four curves from indoors over the three hours and set alarms at 74 °C on the meat probes, so the dome only opens to reload the smoker box. The moment to raise to 190-200 °C, when the thigh passes 65 °C, shows on the curve without guesswork. With a single probe you would have to choose between thigh and breast; with four, you do not.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/inkbird-ibt-4xs

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/pato-ahumado-manzanas-naranjo-kamado

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