

# What's Cookin', Doc...?

**Lee Branch, USA, tells it from memory...**

**M**ost of my game recipes are very simple as I like the taste of the wild game and try not to hide it. All of my cook books are in the States (I'm based in Dubai at the moment) and although I could prepare many of the dishes myself without the books, I would hesitate to pass on recipes to Dagmar without having the books at hand as I might leave out a key requirement. Here's one of the simple ones that I use a lot (I use it exclusively for our mourning doves; it is the very best way to cook them as they can otherwise be dry and a little gamey — but it could be used for almost any small bird). It is very easy to cook in the field as follows:

1. Skin the doves and remove all of the carcass except the breast.
2. Soak the dove breasts (while refrigerated) at least half a day or overnight in a strong solution of baking soda and water.
3. Wash the breasts thoroughly and cover with marinade (while refrigerated) of inexpensive, strong red wine with chopped onion, garlic, bay leaves and Worcestershire sauce for half a day or overnight.
4. Remove the doves from the marinade, sprinkle liberally with black pepper, then wrap each breast with strips of fat pork (we use the cheapest American bacon we can find, which is really just an eighth of an inch thick slice of fat pork, two inches wide by eight inches long) so that the entire breast is covered, then stick a toothpick through it to hold the pork in place.
5. Get a Webber charcoal grill which you can seal off to kill the fire and to build a really hot charcoal fire.
6. Place a minimum of 20 dove breasts (I usually do about 40 to 60 at a time) on the grill, piled up in a pyramid.
7. As soon as the doves are on the grill, liberally sprinkle salt over the entire mound of doves, close off the grill so that the fire smothers in 40-45 minutes.

I use a portable, round Webber Grill about 2.5 feet in diameter, fill it half full of charcoal, place the doves about 6 inches over the fire and seal the bottom damper and the top vents as soon as the doves are placed on the grill. The fire will smother in 45 minutes but will keep the doves hot for a prolonged period. The pork fat will be charred and should be removed immediately prior to eating but the doves will be fine and well basted.

Fixed this way, the doves are delicious, very tender and juicy with a good smoked flavour. Any not eaten on the spot can be eaten cold the next day as they are still good. The pork will baste them throughout the cooking process and I think sealing off the grill tends to have a steaming affect as well. It is also very easy on the cook as once they go on the grill you can forget about them until you get ready to eat.

Anyway, with all the braais you all do down in South Africa, this may be a recipé that is already heavily in use down there but it is one of my most used ones and I thought it might be of interest.

Thanks, Lee. Dagmar says she can just see, by reading it, that this is a good recipe. And no, this is a new one to us folks in SA. —Ed

