

SAUTEED FOIE GRAS WITH CARAMELIZED APPLES & MANGO SAUCE

Serve this appetizer with a semisweet wine that has rich, deep fruit to enhance the mango and apple and to balance the richness of the foie gras -- a *vendange tardive* (late-harvest) Alsatian Riesling or a Tokaji from Hungary.
Serves eight.



FOR THE MANGO SAUCE:

2 Tbs. olive oil

2 shallots, peeled and sliced

1-in. piece unpeeled ginger, sliced thin

1 small chile pepper, split and seeded

Salt

1.5 cups mango puree (made from fresh, ripe mangoes, peeled, cut into chunks, and pureed)

Few drops lime juice

Freshly ground black pepper

1 grade-A fresh duck foie gras, about 1.5 lb.

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 Tbs. butter

1 tsp. sugar

1 tsp. salt

2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 12 wedges each

4 cups mixed fresh greens (watercress, arugula, pea shoots, or a mesclun mix), plus a few more for decoration

1 Tbs. water or white vermouth

For the sauce -- In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil and add the shallots, ginger and a pinch of salt. Cook over low heat until the shallots are soft but not brown, about 3 min. Add the mango puree and heat briefly. Remove from the heat, leave to infuse for about 1 hour, and then pass through a fine strainer. Season with lime juice, *sake*, and salt and peppers to taste. Reserve at room temperature.

To cook the foie gras -- Blot the foie gras dry, separate the lobes, and devein. Using a long, thin, slicing knife, cut each lobe into 5/8" slices, rinsing the blade with hot water between each slice. Use smooth pulling strokes to slice; do not saw back and forth. Keep the slices cold until you're ready to cook them.

Heat two 10-in. sauté pans over medium-high heat. Season the foie gras slices with salt and pepper. When the pans are hot, add the foie gras, pressing firmly on each piece so it makes good contact with the hot pan. Sauté the first side until brown, about 1 min., turn, and continue cooking until the pieces are soft when pressed. During cooking, pour off the excess fat and reserve for cooking the apples. When done, transfer the foie gras slices to paper towels to drain. Keep warm.

To wilt the greens and assemble the dish -- Pour off any remaining fat from the pan and wipe with a paper towel. Add the greens to the pan along with the water or vermouth. Toss for a few seconds until slightly wilted and remove immediately. Divide the wilted greens among eight appetizer plates. Arrange three slices of apple next to the greens, place two slices of foie gras on top of the greens, and spoon some mango sauce across the front of the plate. Decorate with a few fresh greens, if you like. Serve immediately.