CHETTINAD-SPICED PIGEON

This is a recipe from Atul Kochhar's book, "Simple Indian", adapted slightly for the cooking of boneless breasts of wild pigeon, and to serve two. The "Chettinad" masala, however, I have left unchanged and will be enough for four servings and, once made, the dish is very easy to prepare. The masala will keep in a jar for the duration of the game season! The flavour of orange is an inspired contribution, but do note both the juice __and__ the zest are used. The Beetroot Poriyal can be made ahead of time.

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 2)

- ❖ 6 pigeon breasts, each cut into 3 pieces diagonally across the grain
- ❖ 1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil
- ❖ 10 or so curry leaves
- ❖ 1 small onion, halved and thinly sliced
- ❖ 1 tbsp *"Chettinad" Masala* (below)
- ❖ 60ml game or chicken stock, or water
- ❖ Grated zest of half an orange
- ❖ Chopped coriander leaves for garnish

- ❖ *Marinade:*
  1 garlic clove crushed to a paste, ½" piece of ginger, grated, juice of half an orange, ¼ tsp turmeric, ½ tsp salt

- ❖ *"Chettinad" Masala:*
  1 tsp black peppercorns, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 2 tsp fennel seeds, 1 star anise, 5 cardamoms, 2 cloves, 1" cassia or cinnamon stick, broken

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix the ingredients for the *marinade* in a bowl, add the pigeon, coat well and leave for 30 mins or more.

2. Meanwhile, get a heavy-bottomed frying pan hot and put in all the spices for the *"Chettinad" Masala*. Toast them until the spices start to smell aromatic then transfer to a plate. When they

have cooled, place them in a spice or coffee grinder and grind to a fine powder.

3. Heat the oil in sauté pan or similar and, when hot, add the curry leaves. As soon as they crackle, add the onion and sweat it until it takes a little colour. Add 1 tbsp of the *"Chettinad" Masala*, cook for a minute then lift the pigeon pieces from the

marinade and fry them for 1-2 mins so that they take some colour. Pour in the marinade and allow it to bubble for a moment then add the stock or water. Cook gently for 5-10 mins to allow the gravy to thicken. Leave to rest for a few minutes then garnish with the coriander leaves and the orange zest and serve.

Chettinad-Spiced Pigeon, Beetroot Poriyal and Sweet Potato Roti (by @noworriescurries)

SEASONAL SIDE

BEETROOT PORIYAL

Bake 300g beetroot in foil for 40-60 mins at 200°C and when cool, peel and cut into 2cm dice. In 1-2 tbsp coconut, sunflower or vegetable oil, fry 2 tsp black mustard seeds, 1 or 2 dried red chillies, ½ tsp cumin seeds and a handful of curry leaves. As soon as the mustard seeds start to splutter add 40g finely chopped shallot (or onion) and 1 finely chopped green chilli. Over a medium heat cook, stirring occasionally until the onions are golden and then add 3 tbsp grated coconut and continue to cook until the coconut is just starting to toast. At this point add the diced beetroot, season with salt and ground black pepper and as soon as the beetroot has warmed through the dish is ready. Garnish with a few fried curry leaves.