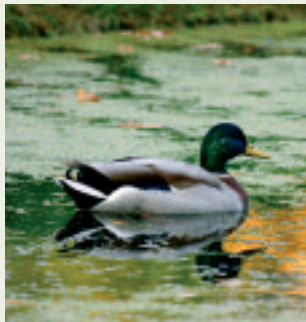


In season

Fresh thinking Wild Mallard



Mallard – the ancestor of most European domestic duck species – is the largest of the wild ducks (although far smaller than farmed) and regarded as having the best eating qualities, with lean, dark, meat. It's in season from 1 September to 31 January (or 20 February below the high-water mark in England, Scotland and Wales).

For Sebastian Snow – chef-owner of Gloucestershire pubs The Plough in Kelmscott, The Five Alls in Filkins, and The Bull Hotel in Fairford – it's a much anticipated seasonal highlight. "I prefer it to partridge: it's more versatile and less delicate, and excellent value, with a greater yield," he says. Snow sources his from local game dealer, Roger's Natural Foods in Whelford.

One of his most popular mallard dishes is pan-fried breast, served on a warm salad of watercress, pea shoots and apple matchsticks, with a sauce of blackberries and sherry vinegar cooked in the duck fat. "The trick is to fry the breast with the skin and wing bone still attached – take the bone off and it will shrink by 25%."

Image: Zoonar RF/Zoonar/thinkstock.co.uk

October's seasonal shopping list



image: alainolympus/istock/thinkstock.co.uk

Fruit & veg

Britain

Beetroot | Bok choy | Broccoli | Brussels sprouts and tops | Cabbages | Cauliflower | Carrots | Celery | Celeriac | Chard | Collard greens | Leeks | Kales | Kohlrabi | Pak choy | Parsnips | Potatoes | Chard | Spinach | Spring greens | Spring onions | Squashes | Swede | Sweetcorn | Romanesco | Turnips | Watercress | Sea aster, sea beat | Cobnuts | Apples | Blueberries | Crab apples | Medlars | Pears | Quince | Raspberries | Rose hips | Strawberries

Italy

Aubergines | Artichokes | Borlotti beans | Cardoon | Catalogna lettuce | Leafy celery | Cime di rapa | Fennel | Borettane onions | Pumpkins | Radicchio | Sweet potatoes | Tomatoes | Turnips | Chestnuts | Bergamot | Cedros | Leafy clemis | Figs | Green mandarins | Miyagawas | Pink Navel oranges | Pears | Persimmons | Plums | Prickly pears | Sorbe

France

Artichokes | Beans | Carrots | Leafy celeriac | Chervil roots | Crosnes | Dandelion | Garlic | Jerusalem artichokes | Lambs lettuce | Onions | Parsley roots | Potatoes | Quince | Radishes | Romanesco | Salsify | Squashes | Watercress | Chestnuts | Dry hazelnuts | Wet walnuts | Apples | Black figs | Grapes | Pears | Quince

Spain

Artichokes | Broccoli | Pimiento de Padrón | Leafy clementines | Courgettes | Lemons | Mangos | Pomegranates

Also look out for

Custard apples | Cranberries | Extra large Medjool Bonbon dates | Golden kiwis | Persimmons | Fresh pistachios

Wild mushrooms

Ceps plentiful (mostly Eastern European) | Scottish/French chanterelles | Girolles | Mousserons | European Ovolis (Caesar's mushroom) | Scottish pied de moutons | Trompettes

Game

Grouse (£12/brace) | Partridge (£8/brace) | Mallard (£13/brace) | Pheasant (£8/brace) | Venison (haunch £11/kg, saddle £19/kg) | NB, not yet cold enough for hare

Suppliers: Fruit, veg Natoora natoora.co.uk, New Covent Garden Market newcoventgardenmarket.com, Reynolds reynolds-cs.com | **Wild mushrooms** Natoora, New Covent Garden Market | Game Everleigh Farm Shop 01264 850344 | **Lamb, pork** David Andrade 020 7236 1173 | **Beef** Peter Tocher, 020 7236 9561 | Fresh Thinking Sebastian Snow @ thebullhotelfairford.co.uk | All prices wholesale and correct at time of going to press (third week Sept)

Meat price watch

As predicted last issue, the trend is for pork prices to stay more or less where they are, notwithstanding occasional jumps in the Euro price due to exchange-rate fluctuations. As we went to press, however, Euro **pork** remained a good 10p/kg cheaper than home-grown, which saw belly at £3.50-£3.60/kg, leg £1.90/kg, neck end £2.40/kg, short loin £2.50/kg and shoulder £2.10/kg. On to **lamb**, and while best end is up from last month at £7.40/kg, most other cuts are down, with carcass prices dropping £1/kg last week and little signs of strengthening for this month at least. So make

the most of shoulder at £4.40/kg, leg at around £4.80-£5/kg, and chine – terrific value at £4.40/kg. **Beef** prices remain static with Scotch fillet around £25-£25.50/kg (English £20-£21/kg), bone-in Scotch loin £12.10/kg (English £10.50-£10.60/kg), ribeye still strong at £15-£16/kg (Scotch), £14/kg (English) and topside £5.50-£6.50/kg. Ribs continue strong at £8.80/kg (Scotch) and £7.80/kg (English). New analysis from the British Retail Consortium has found that beef prices could rise by as much as 29% if the UK does not reach a trade deal with the EU.

Next month's menus

Goldrush apples | Spiky artichokes | Bergamot | January King cabbages | White chicory | Fresh cranberries | Leafy Navel oranges | Navet du Pardailhan | Sicilian pomegranates | Puntarelles | Radicchios (inc Castelfranco, pink, Verona) | Salsify