



# Wild Game ON THE MENU

By Dwight Webb

The Texas Hill Country has many options for wild game. We are all familiar with the white tailed deer hunts of November and December, but one of the most popular hunting options is fast approaching: dove season.

Maybe the only thing more Texan than a late-afternoon hunt spent at the edge of a stock tank – shotgun in hand, searching for doves, shade, and cold beer – is the ritual of enjoying the fruit of the hunt. For many Texans there is one way – the only way, of preparing dove for the table. It involves three ingredients: dove, jalapeños, and bacon. As Executive Chef at the Clubs of Cordillera Ranch I am presented with the privilege of furnishing a recipe for you, the reader. I have selected a recipe that both utilizes game indigenous to our area and is the perfect meal for a delicious dove-season dinner. But if you're a Texan like me, a recipe for bacon-wrapped dove would be downright insulting. We don't need a recipe for that. As Texans, that information is something we were born with. It's in our DNA.

Instead, I'm giving you a recipe for another dove dish that, in my estimation, is every bit as comforting as the one that's part of the Texan's genes. Just like the quintessential recipe for bacon-wrapped dove, it is also simple, with only three ingredients: dove, canned chicken broth, and canned biscuits. Dove and Dumplings. It's adapted from my Mom's recipe for chicken and dumplings, so I guess you could say it's in my DNA as well, right next to that other one.

Here at the Club, we sometimes make Mom's original, chickenized version, but don't be alarmed – we make the biscuits and chicken stock from scratch. I adapted this version to make it more user-friendly for the home cook, but if you're so inclined, feel free to use scratch ingredients the way we do here at the Club.



# Dove & Dumplings

Serves 4

**16 Dove Breasts, bone-in**

**6 Cups Chicken Broth**

**Salt, to taste**

**Fresh-Ground Black Pepper, to taste**

**Sugar, to taste**

**4 Canned Biscuits**

**Flour**

Place the dove in a 6 qt pot and cover with the chicken broth. Bring to a simmer and skim off any foam that rises to the top as the liquid comes to a simmer. Cover and maintain at a low simmer until the dove is tender a starts to come off the bone. This will take 1 to 2 hours depending on the age of the doves.

Once the doves are tender, remove them from the broth and let cool. Season the broth well first with the salt and pepper. Next, season with some sugar. Using a little bit of sugar to season savory dishes is a secret that all chefs and some home cooks know.

You are not trying to make the broth taste sweet, instead, you will find that the right amount of sugar will round out and add depth to all the other flavors in the broth.

Prepare the dumplings by using a rolling pin on a well-floured surface to roll the biscuits to a 1/8th inch thickness. Cut each biscuit into 8 pieces like you would a pizza.

Toss all the pieces well in some extra flour to ensure that they don't stick together. This extra flour is also important to help thicken the broth a bit.

By now the dove will have cooled enough for you to de-bone them. Remove the meat and reserve, discarding the bones. Bring the broth back to a simmer, then add the dumplings and their flour all at once. Stir well to mix in the flour and to make sure the dumplings don't adhere to one another. The dumplings will swell and float to the surface. Stir gently and constantly until the dumplings are done, about 5 to 10 minutes. You will know they are done when the appearance changes from opaque to translucent and they begin to sink rather than float.

Add the dove meat to the pot and simmer 2 to 3 minutes until the dove are heated through, and serve.

This dish is good served any time of the year, but is really best on a chilly night served with hot crusty bread, real butter, and maybe a good glass of un-oaked Chardonnay.

