

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Peter Willis Recipes - The 1785 Inn and Restaurant, North Conway, New Hampshire

Chef Peter Willis of [The 1785 Inn and Restaurant](#) in **North Conway, New Hampshire** graciously shares his culinary vision and his recipe for **Rabbit Two Ways: with Apple Custard, Currants and Port Reduction**, to tempt your palate and provide an inspired look at the restaurant. Built in 1785, the inn and restaurant is a charming respite in the Mount Washington Valley of New Hampshire.

An outdoor enthusiastic, Chef Peter Willis grew up in Connecticut, and studied business in college. His career plans changed though, when his parents bought a cabin in New Hampshire and he started cooking there over the summer. He loved it, and soon discovered that the job found him, as it suited his lifestyle.

He honed his culinary career working at restaurants in Utah and in the White Mountains. While working at The Darby Field Inn, the chef there inspired him as he had spent time in Japan and South America and he used those elements in his cooking. Chef Peter Willis started his own traveling and picking up influences along the way, deftly incorporating Asian, Southwestern, and Santa Fe elements into his culinary vision. He joined The 1785 Inn and Restaurant 19 years ago, where the focus is on the experience of dining.



Chef Peter Willis

I met Chef Peter Willis in December 2012, after having a wonderful dinner at the restaurant, and learned that as every chef has a favorite season, for Chef Peter Willis, it is spring, when ramps and fiddleheads make their arrival, along with mushrooms. He said that he knows his five mushrooms, and that he likes to go out and pick them. The area is also rich with ingredients year-round, including wild game, elk, buffalo, and quail, and excellent cheeses from New Hampshire and nearby Vermont. When not working in the kitchen, Chef Peter Willis likes bicycling, skiing, and hiking, which he said are, "all the reasons to be here."

Chef Peter Willis - The 1785 Inn and Restaurant - Rabbit Two Ways: with Apple Custard, Currants and Port Reduction

Smoked Rabbit Loin Brine Ingredients:

4

Cups

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Water

4

Cups

Apple Juice

0.33

Cup

Kosher Salt

1

Cup

Brown Sugar

1

Cup

Maple Syrup

Sage, Coriander, Peppercorns, Allspice, Cinnamon Stick

Method: Bring to a boil, let cool. Pour brine rabbit overnight. Smoke rabbit loins.

Rabbit Leg Confit Ingredients:

Brined Rabbit Legs

Melted Duck Fat, to cover

Peppercorns, Juniper, Allspice, Coriander Seed

Method: Bake in oven at 200° F (94° C) for 3.5 hours.

Apple Custard Ingredients:

0.5

White Onion, small dice

1

Tablespoons

Butter

1

Large

Apple, small dice

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1

Teaspoon

Brown Sugar

2

Eggs

1

Cup

Heavy Cream

0.25

Cup

Cooked Wild Rice

1

Pinch

Cinnamon

0.50

Teaspoon

Ground Coriander

Method: Preheat oven to 350° F (177° C).

Sauté onion in butter in a small skillet, add spices and caramelize. Set aside. In another skillet, sauté apples in butter, add brown sugar and caramelize. In a mixing bowl, add eggs and heavy cream, and beat together; add cooked rice, onions, and apples.

Butter 3-ounce ramekins or soufflé cups; place the cups in a deep baking pan. Pour the mixture into the ramekins.

Fill the pan with hot water to come half way up the sides of the ramekins, to create a hot water bath. Bake the custard for 30-35 minutes.

Currants and Port Reduction Ingredients:

3

Parts

Port

1

Part

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Currant Paste

Method: Reduce over low heat, 3 parts Port, and 1 part currant paste, until the mixture coats spoon.

The 1785 Inn & Restaurant serves Dinner Sunday through Thursday from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm, Friday and Saturday from 5:00 pm until 10:00 pm, and is open to the public as well as Inn guests. The restaurant is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.



The 1785 Inn

Read about **The 1785 Inn & Restaurant** in the [Restaurants](#) section.



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