CRISP ROAST DUCK

SERVES 4

ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 2 ¼ HR

A whole roasted duck doesn't have to be fussy. With just a few hours' roasting and hardly any work at all, you can have a juicy bird with crisp skin—the best of both textures. This duck is delicious with the plum applesauce on page 106.

- **1 (5- to 6-lb) Long Island duck (also known as Pekin)**
- **2 cups boiling-hot water**
- **1 tablespoon kosher salt**
- **1 teaspoon black pepper**

▸Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.

▸If necessary, cut off wing tips with poultry shears or a sharp knife. Remove and discard excess fat from body cavity and neck, then rinse duck inside and out. Prick skin all over with a sharp fork. Fold neck skin under body, then put duck, breast side up, on a rack in a 13- by 9- by 3-inch roasting pan and pour boiling-hot water over duck (to tighten skin). Cool duck, then pour out any water from cavity into pan. Pat duck dry inside and out, reserving water in pan, then rub duck inside and out with kosher salt and pepper.

"The diet of wild ducks is of interest to the gourmet, for it will make or break the ultimate flavor."

▸Roast duck, breast side up, 45 minutes, then remove from oven. Turn duck over using 2 wooden spoons, and roast 45 minutes more. Turn duck over again (breast side up), tilting duck to drain any liquid from cavity into pan. Continue to roast duck until skin is brown and crisp, about 45 minutes more (total roasting time: about 2¼ hours). Tilt duck to drain any more liquid from cavity into pan. Transfer duck to a cutting board and let stand 15 minutes before carving. Discard liquid in roasting pan.