

Steak Au Poivre

This recipe is a blast from the past, but it's easy and my go-to for entertaining, even if it's only me! Not everything old is boring: quite the contrary, some recipes survive because there simply isn't anything better.

Ingredients

4 tenderloin or New York steaks, no more than 1 ½ inches thick
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons whole peppercorns
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 teaspoon olive oil
1/3 cup Cognac or Bourbon, plus 1 teaspoon
1 cup heavy cream
Lemon juice



Directions

1. Remove the steaks from the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour prior to cooking. Sprinkle all sides with salt.
2. Coarsely crush the peppercorns with a mortar and pestle or smash with the bottom of a cast iron skillet or using a mallet and pie pan. Spread the peppercorns evenly onto a plate. Press the fillets on both sides into the pepper until it coats the surface. Set aside.
3. In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter and olive oil. As soon as the butter and oil begin to turn golden and smoke, gently place the steaks in the pan. For medium-rare, cook for 4 minutes on each side. Once done, remove the steaks to a plate, tent with foil and set aside. Pour off the excess fat but do not wipe or scrape the pan clean.
4. Off of the heat, add 1/3 cup of Cognac or Bourbon to the pan and carefully ignite the alcohol with a long match or firestick. Gently shake the pan until the flames die. Return the pan to medium heat and add the cream. Bring the mixture to a boil and whisk until the sauce coats the back of a spoon, approximately 5 to 6 minutes. Add the teaspoon of Cognac or Bourbon and season to taste with salt.
5. Add the steaks back to the pan, spoon the sauce over and serve.

Wine Pairing Recommendation: 2016 Blue Rock, Best Barrels Cabernet Sauvignon

This is a fabulous, balanced, and elegant version of California Cabernet that has one foot in the old world and the other firmly in Sonoma. It is fun to match with foods because it is versatile for a California Cabernet.

The Don'ts: Don't overpower this wine with strong spices or anything with sweetness. This is a golden rule for rich Cabernet or Bordeaux wines.

The Do's. There are so many great choices, but I like to play with the fat in meat and cheeses to complement the richness and tannic structure of these big reds.