

Pepper Crusted Filet Mignon with Port-Cherry Reduction

Although heating the pepper corns in oil tempers their fire, an even milder flavor can be obtained by draining the oil from the cooled oil-pepper corn mixture and replacing with fresh oil.

Serves 12

Filets

1 ¼ cup black pepper corns, cracked in mortar with pestle
Olive oil
3-4 tbsp kosher salt
12 center-cut filets, 7-8 oz, trimmed

1. Heat cracked pepper corns and cup of oil in sauce pan over low heat until bubbles appear. Continue to cook at bear simmer, swirling occasionally until fragrant, 7-10 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside. See note above. When cool I would suggest draining $\frac{3}{4}$ of the oil, making up volume with fresh oil. Add salt and stir to combine. Make sure you have made an ample quantity of pepper-salt "rub". Rub steaks with peppercorn-salt rub, coating top and bottom. Lay steaks on plastic wrap and then cover with plastic wrap. Gently press the rub into the filet. Let stand at room temperature for an hour.
2. Meanwhile, (1) prepare the cherry-port reduction and (2) adjust oven rack to middle level; place rimmed baking sheet on shelf and pre heat oven to 425.
3. Prepare frying pan to sear filets by adding 2-3 tbsp oil in heavy bottomed skillet on medium-high heat until oil is faintly smoking. Place 4 steaks in skillet. Note: do 3 batches of 4 filets, or 2 batches of 6 filets, whatever equipment allows you to do. Cook without moving until dark brown crust has formed, 3-4 minutes. Using tongs turn filets and cook 3 minutes until well browned. Set aside until all filets seared. Transfer filets to hot baking sheet.

Roast 3 to 5 minutes for rare

Roast 5 to 7 minutes for medium-rare to medium

Transfer filets to wire cooling rack and let rest while tented in foil for 5 minutes.

Transfer filet to plate, add 1-2 tbsp cherry-port reduction. Serve immediately.

Port-Cherry Reduction

Makes 3 cups, enough for 12 filets

4 ½ cup port
1 ½ cup balsamic vinegar
1 ½ cup dried tart cherries
3 large shallots, minced (approx. 9 tbsp.)
6 sprigs fresh thyme
3 tbsp unsalted butter
Salt

1. Combine first five ingredients in sauce pan; simmer over medium heat until reduced to 1 cup or so. Approx. 30 minutes.
2. While filets are resting reheat reduction. Off heat remove thyme and whisk in butter until melted. Season to taste with salt.

Alternative topping

Blue Cheese-Chive Butter

Makes ½ cup

3 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
1 ½ oz. mild blue cheese, room temperature
1/8 tsp salt
2 tbsp minced chives

Combine butter, cheese, and salt in bowl and mix with stiff rubber spatula until smooth. Fold in chives. While filets are resting, spoon 1-2 tbsp butter on each one.