



May 2024
Featured Region:
Bordeaux, France

Cooking with Charlie

Steak au Poivre from Bistrot Paul Bert

Origins

The origins of this classic French Bistro dish are unclear, but one version of its creation is too good not to tell: 1950 Emile Lerch, head chef at one of Paris's most successful restaurants, Restaurant Albert on the Champs-Élysées, publicly announced that he had created the dish in 1930, when he received a shipment of terrible quality American beef and needed to disguise the taste. Pretty much every chef in Paris immediately told him this was ridiculous, as, of course, they had invented it. Food historians generally trace it back to the mid 1800s in Bistros in Normandy, but Lerch's story, with its amazing combination of hubristic self-promotion, disdain for the colonies, and tacit admittal of serving spoiled beef, is hilariously Parisian. Regardless of origins, this is one of the greatest French bistro dishes, and one that is so excellent with Bordeaux reds that we beg you to make it this month and try it with any of these wines. As the new Bordeaux wines remind us of the revitalization of Parisian bistros, we present to you a recipe for steak au poivre from one of the best: Bistrot Paul Bert.





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Cook Time

1 hr 15 min

Serves

4

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon Sarawak peppercorns (black will do, but Sarawak are ideal)
- 4 filet mignons, each 1-to-1 1/2-inches thick
- 1 tablespoon grapeseed or canola oil
- 1/2 tablespoon butter
- 1/4 cup cognac
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt

Directions

Step 1

Bring the steaks to room temperature and crack the peppercorns with a mortar and pestle, or, put them in a dish towel and smash with a rolling pin or heavy pan. Don't use a grinder.

Step 2

Season the steaks heavily with the peppercorn and judiciously with salt.

Step 3

Put a heavy bottomed skillet on high and add oil. When hot add the steaks and cook for two to three minutes a side. When you are halfway through the second side, add butter and baste as you finish cooking. Remove the steaks to rest and immediately pour in the cognac, and light it aflame. When the flames die down, scrape the inside of the pan and turn down the heat to medium.

Step 4

Add the cream, stir, and reduce at a high simmer for three to five minutes. Season carefully with salt to taste, and, if you'd like, add a touch more cognac. Spoon the sauce over the steak and enjoy, ideally with a glass of Claret.

Bon Appétit!

Wine Pairing

Bordeaux. The ones we sent you. Only that.