

Beef Wellington



This is one of those retro dishes that conjure up notions of sophisticated dining using the best silver and crystal. It is time-consuming to prepare rather than difficult. I love to cook it from time to time, as I always receive appreciative responses from impressed diners for what is actually a very straightforward dish, especially if you take the shortcuts of using bought pâté and ready-made pastry!

Ingredients

- ♦ 1 whole beef fillet
- ♦ 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ♦ 35 g/1¼ oz butter
- ♦ 225 g/8 oz field mushrooms, chopped into small dice
- ♦ salt and pepper
- ♦ 500 g/1 lb pâté
- ♦ 6 slices of Serrano ham
- ♦ 500 g/1 lb puff pastry
- ♦ 1 egg, beaten with 1 teaspoon water
- ♦ Red wine sauce
- ♦ 150 ml/5 fl oz red wine
- ♦ 60 ml/2 fl oz beef or chicken stock
- ♦ 30–50 g/1–2 oz cold butter, cubed

Serves 6

To Cook

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7.

The meat should be left out of the fridge for 30 minutes or so to bring it to room temperature. Rub the oil into the meat and place it into a roasting pan and then into the oven for 20–25 minutes for medium to well done. The timing is about taste preference, so adjust it accordingly. When the meat is cooked, remove it from the oven and let it cool completely, reserving the pan juices along with any sediment.

Heat the butter in a separate pan, add the mushrooms and stir until all the liquid is evaporated and the mixture is dry. Season to taste and leave it to cool.

Spread the fillet with the pâté, covering it completely. Lay out a large piece of clingfilm and on top of that line up the slices of ham. Place the pâté-covered fillet on top and spread the mushroom mix over it. Wrap the ham around the fillet and then roll up tightly in the cling-film and refrigerate for about 30 minutes. Roll out the puff pastry into a rectangle larger than the fillet. Unwrap the fillet from the clingfilm and place it on the pastry. Brush the edges of the pastry with the egg mixture. Fold up the long edges of the dough to enclose the sides, pressing together to seal. Fold the ends that have been brushed with the egg mix and press together. Transfer the fillet to an oven tray and place it seam side down. Chill in the fridge for an hour so, and then place in the oven and cook for 30 minutes or until pastry is puffed and golden. To make the red wine sauce, pour the wine and stock into the reserved juices in the roasting tin on top of the stove and deglaze over a medium heat, incorporating all the crusty bits. Boil to reduce the stock by about a third, add the cold butter and stir until the sauce has heated through.