

Fillet of Highland Beef

Serves 6

Cuisine: British

Preparation Time: 2 hours plus refrigeration/set asides

Cooking Time: 20-30 Minutes

Ingredients:

1kg Highland beef fillet, trimmed and wrapped tightly in cling film to form a sausage shape - refrigerated
55g Clarified butter
3 Large floury potatoes such as Maris Piper, peeled, sliced into 2-3cm thick slices
1Ltr Chicken stock
1-2 Sprigs Fresh Rosemary
1-2 Sprigs Fresh Thyme
4 cloves Garlic (unpeeled)
Salt and pepper
Good handful of assorted wild mushrooms (Chanterelle, Morels, Trompetas etc), washed and trimmed
75g Salted butter
1 Squeeze Lemon Juice
250g Double cream
Short measure of Armagnac
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
2 cups each of selected root vegetables – carrots, baby onions, baby leeks, swede
For each ½ cup vegetables – 1 teaspoon unsalted butter, ½ teaspoon sugar
Optional seasonings – 1 thyme sprig, 1 bay leaf, 1 rosemary sprig
Chives and parsley chopped finely

Method:

1. **For the beef:** Place the wrapped beef fillets in boiling stock and then simmer gently for 20 minutes. Remove and unwrap and dry-off with kitchen towel. Season and heat a heavy-based frying pan with the clarified butter on a medium to high heat. Roll the fillets around until golden with some crispy elements to the outside but don't over-cook. Remove and rest on a warmed plate for 3-4 minutes. Reserve the pan with its juices and meat remnants

2. **For the fondant potatoes:** Turn the potato slice edges to give a nicely rounded finish to help with the final presentation. Make the rounds around the same size as the beef medallions will be. Place in a pan with the stock and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat and simmer for 10-12 minutes until tender when pierced with a knife but still quite firm and not breaking up. Drain well. Heat 75g of the salted butter in a heavy based frying pan until it starts to foam. Add the potatoes, cut-side down, with the garlic and herbs. Cook for 4-5 minutes then turn and cook for a further 3-4 minutes or until the potatoes are golden in colour. Discard the garlic and herbs, season and serve.
3. **For the vegetables:** Place each type of the vegetables in a loose single layer in a separate saucepan. Add cold water to just cover the vegetables. Then add the butter, sugar, optional seasonings and a pinch of salt. Bring to the boil then adjust and simmer gently for 10-15 minutes. Ideally the veggies will finish cooking while the liquid reduces to a glaze. If they are tender before the liquid has reduced to a glaze, remove them and reduce the liquid to about 2 tablespoons, then return to the pan.

Season the vegetables with salt and roll them around in the glaze to coat them thoroughly. These can be prepared a couple of hours in advance and held at room temperature.

To serve, combine all the veg in one pan and toss them together. Reheat if necessary and add more salt if needed. Transfer to the plates discarding the seasonings – sprinkle with chopped chives, parsley and fleur de sel.

4. **For the mushrooms:** Place the mixed mushrooms in a saucepan with a good knob of butter and cook out water – we want these sautéed not boiled! Add a squeeze of lemon juice
5. **For the sauce:** Take the pan reserved from cooking the beef and put over a medium to high heat. Deglaze with the Armagnac and flame it. Scrape all the bits off the bottom of the pan and include in the jus until it has reduced by half. Add the double cream and stir in until it takes on the beef colour. Add a spoonful of Dijon mustard and mix in. Reduce further until it becomes a thicker, creamy consistency – sieve if necessary to remove any unsightly bits - ready to serve immediately – do not delay on this part or the sauce thickens to an unusable point when cooling. Make sure you have made enough for 6 servings.

To Serve:

Place the fondant potato centrally on the plate, add the beef medallion/s on top and then arrange the glazed vegetables on top of that. Surround by a generous drizzle of the Armagnac cream sauce and scatter the wild mushrooms through the sauce – serve immediately.

Chef's Notes:

I sometimes add a roasted baby aubergine for colour effect and taste combination.