

Filet Mignon with Wine Cherry Sauce

This was our favorite date night recipe, back when our son was young enough to go to bed early so that we could have date night.

- Two 6 oz. or 8 oz. filets of beef tenderloin (Buying good meat is key. I don't recommend bacon-wrapped filets for this, as the bacon won't get crispy and the sauce is better without bacon fat. If your filets come with bacon, you could take it off, microwave it, and have some crispy bacon bits to serve on the side as a topping.)
- salt and pepper
- olive oil or another cooking oil, enough to coat a pan
- 1/2 teaspoon concentrated beef broth (you could also use the powdered version, but I find the jars of concentrated broth a lot easier to work with)
- 1/4 cup of cooking sherry
- 1 cup of dry red wine (I use cheap wine for this -- from a box, usually. But there's nothing wrong with using nicer wine if that's more convenient.)
- 1 handful (about a third of a cup) of dried cherries (You can buy these in bulk at Whole Foods or HEB Central Market. They keep a long time, so I usually buy a couple cups at a time.)
- half a cup of sliced mushrooms
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch (optional)

Heat the oil in a pot that's wide enough to hold both filets. Try to use something with high sides to minimize splattering. Sprinkle salt and pepper on both sides of the filets, then place them in the oil with a long pair of tongs. Brown them on each side for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the filets and set them aside.

Pour the sherry, wine, concentrated broth, dried cherries, and mushrooms into the same pot and stir up all the bits that are stuck to the bottom. Turn the heat down to medium. When the sauce is simmering, put the filets back in the pot and cover. Turn the filets regularly and keep simmering until cooked to your liking. I've never been able to figure out the exact time it takes to cook them to rare or medium rare, so after about five minutes I'll start cutting in to them periodically to see if they're done. Cooking them on the stove like this makes it easy to check for doneness. If the liquid dries up too quickly, add water or beef broth (if you have it).

When the filets are done, remove them to the serving plates. Turn the heat up to high. If you want a thicker sauce, mix the cornstarch with some cold water and stir it into the sauce (it will thicken as it boils). Spoon the cherries (and mushrooms) around the filets, then pour some of the sauce over the top. Serve the remaining sauce in a small cup.