

# Revive an old favourite

For those of you who are waiting until the weekend to celebrate Valentine's Day, then this might just be the recipe for you!

Beef Wellington is a wonderful treat— something you don't see much of anymore. Maybe it's time to revive it! This recipe takes awhile to prepare and assemble, but almost all of it can be done in advance— making it really easy to cook and serve on the night in question.

For the beef tenderloin to work properly in your recipe, it is important how it is cut. First of all, buy it from a good butcher and make sure it is great quality and well aged. When you see it in the store, it should be dark red (not bright red) and it should be dry in appearance (not wet) and it should be matte (not shiny). The meat should also be very well trimmed. There should not be any membrane left on the exterior of the meat.

You want a centre cut piece— the one end of the tenderloin (known as the tail) is too thin and the opposite end is too large around. You need 3 oz per Wellington (yes— you only need that much meat or by the time you make the Wellington, it will be gigantic). So, buy just over a one pound piece (or about 540 g); this will be perfect for six Wellingtons. When you get home, gently mark the meat before you cut it, just so you make sure you know what you are doing because once it is cut, you can't glue it back together. Ideally, with a centre cut piece, you should be able to cut it lengthwise into two

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pieces and then crosswise, twice, giving you six pieces altogether. They should be very short thick pieces.

The cooking time in the recipe should give you a medium rare serving. If you want it done a little more, add a few more minutes cooking time. Don't forget to let it sit and rest before serving so that all the lovely beef juices are back in the beef where they belong and not squirting out all over the plate.

If you are making the accompanying sauce, serve the sauce on the side. If you serve it on the plate, the pastry will become soggy— not exactly the presentation you were looking for!

Spend money on good meat. For this recipe please don't skimp and buy a cheap cut. Go to a butcher shop and spend the money on a great piece of tenderloin. You don't need very much and you will be VERY happy that you did. I know I was.

If you are pairing up a wine, make sure you go for a big bold red and use that same red when making the sauce.

Have fun and keep cooking!

(Lori and Gerry can be reached at [whatscookin@independentfreepress.com](mailto:whatscookin@independentfreepress.com))

# Individual Beef Wellingtons

Serves 6

## Ingredients

- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 6 pieces beef tenderloin (each piece should be 3 oz)
- 5 shallots, finely chopped
- 9 medium white mushrooms, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 50 g pate de fois gras
- 1-2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 box PC butter puff pastry
- 1 egg, slightly beaten with a tsp of water

## Sauce ingredients

- 1 tbsp butter
- 4-5 shallots, finely chopped
- 9 medium white mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 3 stems fresh thyme
- 8 black peppercorns
- 1-2 cups beef stock
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup port

## Method

1. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large frying pan (preferably a steel pan—not non-stick). Heat the oil until very hot, almost smoking. Carefully add the pieces of filet. Browning on each side for no more than 30 seconds. Turn off the heat, remove the beef and set aside. Do not wash the pan!

2. In the same pan, melt the butter and oil.

3. Sauté the shallots and mushrooms until caramelized (approximately 15 minutes).

Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside to cool slightly. Once cooled, mix in pate de fois gras. Refrigerate until ready for use.

4. Lay out one sheet of the puff pastry. Divide the sheet into four pieces, as square as possible.

5. Lay out the second sheet of puff pastry. Cut the sheet in half. With one half of the pastry, cut again in half to give you two squares. With the other half, cut in six— to give you six smaller pieces of pastry.

6. On a baking sheet covered with parchment paper, lay one piece of the puff pastry. Place one spoonful of the mushroom mixture on the pastry in the middle of the square. Spread one piece of the filet with mustard (thinly on all sides). Lay the filet on top of the mushroom mixture. Lay one small piece of puff pastry on top.

7. Gently bring up the main square of pastry around the beef so that it joins the small piece. Be careful not to stretch the pastry if possible.

6. Carefully flip the pastry enclosed beef over— this is the top side.

8. Brush the top and sides of the pastry with the egg wash. Repeat with other five pieces of beef. Refrigerate until ready to bake.

9. To make the sauce, sauté the shallots and mushrooms in the butter in the same pan that was used to sear the beef. Cook the shallots and mushrooms until caramelized. Deglaze the pan with red wine and cook down until the wine is almost evaporated. Add the thyme, beef stock and peppercorns. Boil rapidly over high heat until reduced to one cup. Strain through a fine sieve, pressing through as much liquid as possible. Return the sauce to the pan and add port. Reduce for another few minutes. Adjust for salt and pepper. Serve with the beef Wellington.

10. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Set the rack on the middle rung.

11. Bake the Wellingtons for 10-20 minutes, until the pastry is puffed and golden brown— the pastry should not appear transparent at all. Remove from the oven. Allow to rest for 5 minutes, and then serve.



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