

GRILLED BEEF FILET STUFFED WITH SMOKED GOUDA, ONION, SWEET SAUSAGE AND SPINACH



*Award-Winning chef, and culinary poet, Lamar Thomas, has contributed this month's recipe, which can be found in his soon to be published book, **Ginger, Lily, and Sweet Fire: A Romance with Food**. To experience Thomas' world class cuisine visit him at the East West Bistro in Downtown Athens.*





GRILLED BEEF FILET STUFFED WITH SMOKED GOUDA, ONION, SWEET SAUSAGE AND SPINACH

- 2, 7 oz center cut beef tender loin filets
- 1 oz smoked gouda, grated
- 2 stalks green onion, diced
- 2 oz sweet Italian sausage, cooked and chopped
- 4 leaves fresh spinach, chopped
- ½ tsp salt and pepper mix

Chop and mix the gouda, scallion, sausage, spinach, and salt and pepper blend. Cut a one-inch opening in the side of each filet. With the knife inside the meat cut two thirds of the way in and cut a semicircular cavern. Divide the stuffing and fill each filet.

Grill on medium hot coals about four inches above the coals. Cook five minutes, turn, cook five minutes turn again, and try to

make an X in the meat with the grill marks. (It looks like you know what you are doing when you make the X.) Usually the meat will be fully cooked to a good medium rare in less than fifteen minutes on a hot grill. But this is where the thermometer comes in handy. Medium rare will be 130 degrees. I prefer it at 120. If you are serving an unstuffed filet, 117 to 120 for a red rare. A digital instant read thermometer is the best of all possible choices for a thermometer.

MEAT: HERE'S WHAT THE USDA SAYS:

VERY RARE:	115 TO 120	
	<i>(They don't recommend very rare.)</i>	
RARE:	120 TO 130	140
MEDIUM RARE:	130 TO 135	150
MEDIUM:	135 TO 150	160
MEDIUM WELL:	150 TO 165	170

Also, beef and all other meats will cook during their resting period after you remove them from the direct heat, which is why I recommend a lower temperature during cooking check. If you are cooking large cuts of beef or pork, the time for the meat to come together is about fifteen minutes. During this fifteen minutes the temperature will rise anywhere between three and eight degrees. Keep that in mind. Roasts will rise a minimum of ten degrees.

SAUCE:

RED WINE BUTTER SAUCE, OR BEURRE ROUGE

- 1 cup decent red wine, the kind is your choice
- 2 Tbl red wine vinegar, or balsamic vinegar (preferred)
- 2 bulbs shallots, minced i.e. fine dice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 6 oz. cold butter cut in quarter ounce slices
- ½ tsp salt and pepper blend

Put the shallot, garlic, vinegar and wine in a high-sided sauce pan. Turn heat on high and boil the wine down to almost four table-spoons of liquid. You have to watch this, don't go anywhere away from the stove.

NOW, use a flexible wire whisk to stir. Remove from heat and quickly stir in the butter, one slice at a time. You may have to return to the heat halfway through, but only do so if the sauce begins to congeal and not just thicken. WHISK FAST. Do so until all the butter is incorporated into the wine shallots. Add salt and pepper.

There, you have made a classic French Beurre Rouge. The taste will be rich and a little tart. Use immediately.

Variations: make it with white wine; add beef stock; use a touch of cream to enrich it even more, and to stretch the sauce; any kind of fresh herbs at the end of whisking, a little bourbon to give it a Kentucky feel, it can also be made with sake or vodka added to the wine.

What kind of sides would be good with this? How about a Caesar salad? You can go two ways, do it with the traditional Caesar dressing, or with a Raspberry Vinaigrette. Guess which one I want?

You can buy the raspberry mustard or make it. To make the mustard just blend together:

RASPBERRY MUSTARD

- 2 tsp French grain mustard
- 4 tsp raspberry puree

SIMPLE RASPBERRY VINAIGRETTE

- 6 Tbl raspberry mustard
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp sugar

Whisk together.

Arrange lettuce on plate in circular fan. Drizzle sauce over lettuce. Sprinkle salad with onion, red hots, and flowers.