

Classic Steak au Poivre

Ingredients

2 entrecôte (sirloin) steaks, or you could use rump steak if you prefer, weighing 6-8 oz (175-225 g) each
2 heaped teaspoons whole black peppercorns
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
5 fl oz (150 ml) red wine
salt

Equipment

N/A

Method

If you've got time, prepare your steak au poivre one or several hours ahead. Begin by crushing the peppercorns very coarsely with a pestle and mortar (if you don't have a pestle and mortar then use the back of a tablespoon and crush them on a flat surface).

Now take a shallow dish, large enough to hold 2 steaks comfortably side by side, then pour 1 tablespoon of the olive oil mixed with half a clove of the crushed garlic into the dish.

Then coat each steak evenly on both sides with the crushed peppercorns, pressing them in firmly. Lay the steaks in the dish and spoon the other tablespoon of oil and the rest of the garlic over them. Cover with clingfilm and leave them aside for several hours, turning them over once.

When you're ready to cook the steaks, you need a thick-based frying pan. Place it over a very high heat and let it preheat until it's very hot indeed – the more daring you can be in getting the pan really hot, the better the finished steak will be! Now quickly drop each steak directly into the pan. Sear them quickly on both sides – give them about 1 minute on each side.

Then lower the heat and cook them how you want them. Some people like them 'blue', which means seared only and very rare; for medium rare give them 3 more minutes, and for well done, 4 more minutes.

Either way, 1 minute before the end of the cooking time, pour in the wine, then let it bubble and reduce down to a syrupy consistency about one-third of its original volume. This whole process will be very brief. Sprinkle with salt and serve the steaks as quickly as possible with the wine sauce poured over.

If you want to be really French, serve with frites and a green salad.

