

## **Roast Beef recipe**

Roast beef should be one of the simplest dishes to cook but there is more to it than just slamming it in the oven. The quality of beef is all important, but don't forget about the timing and technique.

Allow approx 350g (12oz) meat per portion.

### **Ingredients:**

4-5 kg (8 -10 lb) wing rib or strip loin of beef (preferably Aberdeen Angus hung for 18 - 24 days)

30ml (2 tblsp) English mustard

15ml (1 tblsp) maple syrup

60ml (4 tblsp) water

salt/pepper

15 ml (1 tblsp) of beef dripping

### **Instructions:**

Remove your meat from the refrigerator 30 minutes before you plan to cook it and pre-heat the oven to 250 degrees C/482 degrees F/Gas mark 9.

Season the meat at the last minute to prevent the salt drawing out the blood and juices and season liberally as a large proportion of it will be washed off the joint by the fat. Mix the mustard, water and the maple syrup together and massage this into the meat, this assists with the flavourings and colour of the joint.

Heat a heavy based pan or roasting tray over high heat with the dripping. When the fat is hot, carefully lower in the beef to commence the browning process. Then place the joint in the very hot oven at 220 degrees C/425 degrees F/Gas mark 7 for 20 -25 minutes. Baste the joint with the beef's fat, and turn down the oven to 180 degrees C/350 degrees F/Gas mark 4, allowing 15 minutes per 450g/1 lb plus an extra 15 minutes.

Once the joint is cooked allow a further 30 minutes resting time in a turned off oven or a warm place.

### **Alan's tips:**

When the beef is cooked don't cut into it straight away because the juices are very hot and ready to escape. Let it rest in a warm place. This will enable the juices and temperature of the meat to stabilise rendering the meat more juicy and succulent as well as making it easier to carve.

For improved flavour, roast your meat on a bed of chunky root vegetables. This will also raise the joint above the fat in the roasting tray and prevent it from frying as opposed to roasting.

## **The Science**

### **Well hung beef!**

Beef is so much tastier and more tender if it's been hung for longer. Meat is just the muscle of the animal. As you can imagine, muscle is usually pretty

taut and tough and needs to be tenderised. The best way is to let it happen naturally by hanging up the carcass. Enzymes are produced, which eat away at the muscle fibre, breaking it down and making it more tender. It also gets tastier, because you end up with more small molecules. These easily vapourise when you put the meat in your mouth, so you get to smell them as you chomp away at the meat. And that makes the meat taste better, since your sense of smell is so important when you eat things. You can tenderise the meat yourself by bashing it with a meat tenderiser, but that only helps the texture a bit; it doesn't break down the molecules enough to make the meat more flavoursome.

### **Coating the outside**

The flour from the mustard powder and the sugar from the syrup react together with the protein from the meat, and it is this reaction, called the Maillard Reaction, that produces the brown colour and the really meaty flavour. The more you have of it the better things taste. The sugar and mustard aren't crucial but they help the reaction along. The reaction is perhaps the most important in all of cooking. It's what makes chips golden, cakes go brown and chicken skins crispy, as well as making meat go brown. But you need quite a high temperature to make the reaction occur, so by heating the meat in the pan, you force the reaction to begin.

### **Fat on meat**

I know it's not great for you, but fat is really important when you're cooking meat because the flavour molecules dissolve in the fat in the meat, rather than in the water in the muscle. So it's the fat that carries the flavours. I'd rather have beef just occasionally - and really enjoy it with some of the fat, than have lean and tasteless beef more often.

### **How to tell when it's done**

I use a temperature probe to test my meat. A probe is just so handy in the kitchen; it takes away that worry that you are over or under cooking meat. For beef, up to about 60°C and it's rare, 60-70°C is medium rare, 70-80°C its getting pretty tough and well done. I like my meat quite rare. That's because high temperatures make meat tough. The higher the temperature, the more the muscle fibres scrunch up, squeezing water out. The water keeps meat moist, tender and succulent. If you lose too much, your meat gets tough and dry, so keep the oven temperature low.

### **Sealing in the juices**

This business about 'sealing in the juices' of meat is a myth! It's something we've all been brought up with. But in reality, the meat juices can just seep through seared meat and escape anyway. It *is* a good idea though to sear the meat before cooking, because it gets the reaction going, described above, that browns the outside of the meat and makes it taste so good. It's better to do this before you cook the meat; doing it after cooking means you risk over-cooking it.

### **Accompaniments**

#### **Roasted potatoes with garlic and parmesan**

**Ingredients:**

40g (1½ oz) butter, clarified  
1 clove of garlic, crushed  
3 potatoes, peeled and par boiled (cook for approx 5 mins only)  
40g (1½ oz) parmesan cheese  
salt/pepper  
15ml (1 tblsp) veg oil

**Instructions:**

Pre heat oven to 220 degrees C/ 425 degrees F /Gas mark 7. Combine the butter with the garlic and cheese. Scratch the outside of the par boiled potatoes with a fork. Heat the butter and oil in a roasting tray and add the potatoes. Toss the potatoes around in the tray. Sprinkle with the second batch of parmesan cheese and roast for around 30-40 minutes.

**Herb scented Yorkshire puddings****You will need**

Large pudding tins

**Ingredients:**

115g (4oz) strong flour sieved  
115g (4oz) self-raising flour sieved  
3 fresh eggs, large  
approx 400ml/ 14fl oz milk  
beef dripping for the trays  
1 tblsp chopped thyme  
1 tblsp chopped sage  
salt/pepper

**Instructions:**

Pre-heat oven to 220 degrees C/ 425 degrees F/Gas mark 7. Place trays into the oven to heat. Place the sieved flour into a large bowl. Add the eggs and a little milk and beat thoroughly. Add the remaining milk a little at a time. The total quantity will depend upon the strength of the flour. Whisk the batter thoroughly, strain at this point if necessary. Add the seasoning and herbs. Leave to rest for 15-20 minutes. Add a little more liquid if needed as the batter may thicken slightly while resting. Add the dripping to the hot pans. Return to heat for 5-6 mins.

Pour the batter mix into the hot trays (the batter should bubble). Place into a hot oven for around 20 - 25 mins. The timings will depend upon the type of oven and the size and depth of the pudding trays.

**Honey and lime-glazed parsnips****Ingredients:**

2 tblsp unsalted butter  
675 g (1½ lb) parsnips, cut into 4  
30 ml (2 tblsp) clear honey

juice of 1 lime  
juice of 1 orange

**Instructions:**

Pre-heat oven to 190 degrees C /375 degrees F /Gas mark 5. Heat the butter in large roasting tray. Add the parsnips and stir in the butter. Add the honey and stir well in. Cook for 2-3 mins. Add the lime juice, orange juice, sprinkle of sea salt and black pepper. Place into the pre heated oven and roast for 35 - 40 minutes. Garnish with fresh parsley and lime wedges.