

Venison Wellington (serves 4-6)

Makes a delicious celebration meal which is wonderfully rich and tasty using lean venison loin. Ask your butcher to trim the loin from the middle section so that it's evenly sized. This dish can be made up to 24 hours before baking, allowing you to prep in advance. Leftovers can be refrigerated or frozen and enjoyed another day. Using a food thermometer inserted into the centre of the cooked meat will allow you to cook it to perfection, without any of the guess-work. This dish tastes great accompanied by a red wine and beef reduction, with a dash of redcurrant jelly for added zing.



Ingredients

700g trimmed loin of Scottish Venison
1.5 tbsp English mustard
375g block of puff pastry
300g chestnut mushrooms
40g unsalted butter
1 tbsp picked thyme leaves
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tbsp brandy (optional)
1 shallow, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
12 slices prosciutto
Salt & pepper
2 egg yolks, beaten

Method

1. Allow venison to come to room temperature (30 minutes).
2. Rub the venison dry all over with kitchen roll. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Heat a large frying pan and add 1 tbsp oil. Sear the meat on all sides until just browned. Remove from the heat, and place on a board. Keep the pan, with cooking juices for later.

4. Brush the venison over with mustard then leave to cool.
5. Meanwhile prepare the mushrooms by pulsing them in a food processor until they are very finely chopped.
6. Return the pan you used for browning the meat to the heat. Add butter and as soon as it melts add the finely chopped shallots, crushed garlic and thyme and cook gently until the shallots have softened (around 5 minutes). Add the finely chopped mushrooms and cook until most of the water has evaporated and the mushrooms seem dry. This could take up to 20 minutes. Keep your eye on the pan and stir every so often so the mushrooms don't catch or burn. Once the mushrooms are dry add the brandy, if using, and cook this off until evaporated. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the mushrooms to cool.
7. Overlap 2-3 sheets of cling film and lay the slices of prosciutto in 2 rows slightly overlapping each other to form a large square of around 20cm. Ensure there is enough cling film on all sides which hasn't been covered to help to wrap up the venison (around 3-4 cm on each side).
8. Spread the cooled mushroom mixture all over the prosciutto slices in a thin, even layer.
9. Place the cooled venison loin in the centre of the mushroom mixture. Using the edge of the cling film carefully draw the prosciutto and mushroom mixture around the venison.
10. Roll it into a tight sausage shape, twisting the ends of the cling film as you go, to form a tight log. Chill in the fridge.
11. Meanwhile roll out the block of pastry into a rectangle just a bit bigger than A4 / magazine size.
12. Remove the venison from the fridge and place it in the centre of the rolled pastry.
13. Fold over the bottom half of pastry over the venison. Brush the rest with beaten egg yolk. Roll the other side over to encase the venison. Neatly fold under the short edges to create a parcel.
14. Trim away any excess. Brush the wellington all over with egg yolk. Place on a lined baking tray and chill again for at least 30 minutes before cooking.
15. Preheat oven to 200 degrees celsius.
16. Remove the wellington from the fridge and brush again with any remaining egg yolk.
17. Bake for 20 - 25 minutes for medium. If you're using a food thermometer remove the wellington when it is cooked to your liking - be sure to check after 15-20 minutes and bare in mind the meat will continue to cook for a while after you remove it from the oven (rare 45 degrees, medium rare 50, medium 55, well done 60).
18. Rest the meat for 20 minutes before serving. While the meat is resting make your gravy (*recipe for redcurrant gravy can be linked*).
19. Serve by slicing into 4 to 6 portions (around 6 slices per wellington).