



Venison Tenderloin With Madeira Green Peppercorn Sauce

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If venison isn't for you, beef tenderloin is a good alternative (see cooks' note, below). Because beef is not as dense and rich as venison, the portions are slightly larger (cooking times and temperatures will also be different).

Active time: 15 min Start to finish: 50 min

Makes 2 servings.

ingredients

1 (1/2-lb) piece venison tenderloin (1 1/2 inches in diameter), trimmed, at room temperature for 30 minutes
1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
1/4 cup finely chopped shallot
1/4 cup Madeira wine
1/3 cup beef or veal demi-glace
1 teaspoon drained green peppercorns in brine, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon unsalted butter

Special equipment: an instant-read thermometer

Garnish: parsnip crisps

preparation

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.

Pat venison dry and sprinkle with black pepper and 1/4 teaspoon salt.

Heat oil in an ovenproof 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until just smoking, then brown venison on all sides (except ends), about 3 minutes total.

Transfer skillet with venison to oven and roast until thermometer inserted diagonally 2 inches into center registers 115°F, 4 to 5 minutes.

Transfer venison with tongs to a plate and let stand, loosely covered with foil, 5 minutes (temperature will rise to 125°F for medium-rare).

While meat stands, add shallot to skillet (handle will be hot) and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until golden, about 2 minutes.

Add Madeira and deglaze skillet by boiling, stirring and scraping up brown bits, until liquid is reduced by half, about 1 minute. Add demi-glace and boil, stirring, until sauce is slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Stir in peppercorns, butter, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and any meat juices that have accumulated on plate, then remove from heat.

Cut venison into 1/2-inch-thick slices and serve with sauce.

Cooks' note:

- Beef tenderloin can be substituted for venison.

Use 1 (3/4-lb) filet mignon (3 inches in diameter). Brown on all sides (including ends), about 5 minutes total, then roast until thermometer inserted into center registers 120°F, 18 to 20 minutes. Let stand, loosely covered with foil, 10 minutes (temperature will rise to 130°F for medium-rare). Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from skillet before making sauce.

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