



Recipes by Hubert Keller

Burger au Poivre

Ingredients:

(Yields: 4 servings)

- 1 tablespoon dried green peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon white peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon pink peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon whole coriander seeds
- 2 pounds coarsely ground NY strip steak or sirloin, chilled
- About 1/2 cup Dijon mustard
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon cognac or brandy
- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 1 1/2 cups Brown Chicken Stock or low-sodium packaged chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1 large baguette buns, cut into 4 buns about 5 to 6 inches long
- 4 large leaves butter or Bibb lettuce
- 2 small tomatoes, thinly sliced

Directions:

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This recipe turns a classic French preparation for skirt or New York Strip steak into a burger. Here, I have mimicked the shape of the steak by forming the ground meat into oblong burgers which fit neatly into buns cut from baguettes. The peppercorn blend tweaks the traditional blend by adding whole coriander seeds. Use the peppercorn blend for everyday cooking. If you prefer, you can also buy a multi-pepper blend in the supermarket. I recommend cooking these burgers on top of the stove. Otherwise the peppercorns might fall off and burn. In a small bowl, mix together the green, white, pink, and black peppercorns with the coriander. Enclose the mix in a tea towel and, with the edge of a heavy pan, the flat side of a meat tenderizer or a rubber mallet, crush the peppercorns. You want fairly large, crunchy pieces like cracked pepper, not a powder. Shake the crushed pepper into a small bowl.

Handling gently to keep the texture light and juicy, divide the meat into 4 evenly-sized, elongated patties about an inch thick. Generously brush the patties on both sides with mustard. Then press about 1 1/2 teaspoons cracked pepper onto the top and bottom of each patty. The burgers can be shaped and refrigerated, covered, for several hours or overnight.

When ready to cook, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Generously season the meat on both sides with salt.

Cook the burgers in the skillet, turning once or twice, 7 to 10 minutes for medium-rare. Do not press down on the patties. With a large spoon, baste the burgers several times with the fat in the pan. (You can also preheat the oven to 450° F and cook the burgers on top of the stove until they are brown on both sides, and then finish them in the oven.) Remove the burgers to a warm platter and keep warm while making the pan sauce.

Pour off the fat remaining in the burger skillet and return it to medium-high heat. Add the cognac and the red wine and stir and scrape all over the bottom and sides of the pan to loosen all the browned bits. Cook until the pan is nearly dry, about 2 minutes, and then add the stock. Bring to a boil and cook until reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Add the cream and simmer to meld the flavors, another 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in 1 teaspoon of the remaining mustard and immediately remove the pan from the heat. You should have about 1 1/2 tablespoons of sauce per person.

While the sauce reduces, toast the buns in a toaster oven or under the broiler, about 5 inches from the heat, until lightly toasted.

To assemble the burgers, moisten the bun bottoms with a little of the sauce. Top with the lettuce, tomatoes, and then the burgers. Pour the sauce over the burgers and close with the bun tops. Serve immediately.