

Seared Bison Strip Loin with Juniper and Fennel

Recipe by Thomas McNamee

ACTIVE: 15 MIN TOTAL: 1 HR 45 MIN
10 SERVINGS

Cosentino spices his bison strip loin with juniper, since juniper berries often grow where bison graze; the bison can also be replaced with a beef strip loin. For putting a good crust on a juicy steak, Cosentino says, "A hot stone is awesome!" Sometimes known as cooking *a la plancha*, the method requires heating a smooth stone or cast-iron griddle over hot coals, creating a surface ideal for searing, no oil required. Pizza stones work well here.

2 tablespoons black peppercorns
2 tablespoons fennel seeds
1 tablespoon juniper berries
One 5-pound bison or beef strip loin
Salt
Burrata Salsa, for serving



1. In a spice grinder, grind the peppercorns, fennel seeds and juniper berries to a coarse powder. Season the strip loin with salt and rub with the spice mixture. Let stand at room temperature for 1 hour.
2. Light a grill. Place a large pizza stone on a grate and heat until it is very hot, about 10 minutes. (To test the temperature, place a lemon slice or a few drops of water on the stone; the lemon should caramelize on contact and the water should bounce off the surface.) Set the strip loin on the hot stone and cook for about 30 minutes, turning once or twice, until the outside is richly browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the meat registers 125° for medium-rare.
3. Transfer the steak to a work surface and let rest for 10 minutes. Carve into thick slices and serve with the Burrata Salsa.

SERVE WITH Grilled spring onions or scallions and red onion slices

WINE Some red grape varieties are known for their herbal nuances – Cabernet Franc, for instance, often has a distinctive floral pepperiness that makes it an interesting partner for Cosentino's juniper-inflected strip loins. Two good choices from the U.S. are the cherry-rich 2006 Lang & Reed North Coast from California and the fragrant 2005 Schneider Vineyards Le Breton from New York.

Burrata Salsa

TOTAL: 15 MIN

MAKES 1¼ CUPS

Cosentino serves this puree of burrata (cream-filled mozzarella) with his bison strip loin, a combination he calls "Italian cheesesteak." Buffalo mozzarella can also be substituted for the burrata. The sauce is a luxe match for any grilled meat.

4 ounces burrata cheese coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon whole milk

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

In a blender or food processor, combine the burrata with the milk and lemon juice and blend until smooth. With the machine on, add the olive oil in a thin stream. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

MAKE AHEAD The salsa can be kept at room temperature for up to 4 hours. Blend once more before serving.

Food & Wine Magazine, August 2008

"A Carnivore's Cookout at Prather Ranch"

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Chef Chris Cosentino

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