



Cooking with Wine

One of the ways to add great flavor to dishes and cut down on fat is to cook with wine. When wine is reduced in your dish, it concentrates flavor. Since flavors like to go to fat, when cutting down on the fats used in your cooking, wine is another vehicle for delivering flavor.

Cook with wine that is drinkable. This means that when you decide on a recipe that requires wine, you should select a wine that is good enough to enjoy drinking. A common mistake that people make is going to the wine shop and purchasing the least expensive red or white they can. Cook with the same type of wine you will be drinking. The wine that you will be serving for dinner should complement the food that you are serving so you should cook with the same type of wine you would be serving with the meal. If you are cooking with a dry Italian red, then you want to serve similar with the meal. For those who don't generally keep wine in the house, white vermouth is a good choice for cooking because it is made with a blend of savory herbs and lasts longer in the fridge than an open bottle of wine. Wine not only can be used in place of fats, it can be added to deglaze a pan that has been used to brown, sear, or caramelize foods prior to creating a sauce. The little bits of food that are stuck to the pan are called fond; these bits are quickly and easily lifted when you add a splash of wine (or any liquid) to the hot pan. This creates the basis for your sauce and adds a great deal of flavor to the dish. It is also a good idea to remove the pan from the heat while doing this. Research has indicated that 98-99% of the alcohol cooks out of the dish.

Porcini Mushroom Sauce for Pasta

I make this sauce in large quantities and freeze for busy days or unexpected company. There is something so nice about reaching into your freezer and finding dinner!

- 1 – 2 ounces Dried Porcini
- 1 Tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped, about 1 cup
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound ground beef
- ½ - 1 cup dry red wine such as Barbera or Chianti
- 28 ounces crushed tomatoes (canned are fine)

½ cup fresh basil leaves
1 Tablespoon fresh oregano leaves

Rehydrate Porcini. Bring a cup or two of water to a boil. Remove from heat, add dried mushrooms. Let steep several minutes until mushrooms are softened. Remove mushrooms from liquid. Chop. Save the liquid for the sauce.

Place extra virgin olive oil in 6 quart saucepan. Add onion and garlic. Cook until onion is translucent and garlic is fragrant. Do not brown the garlic. Add beef. Brown beef.

Add wine. Deglaze pan. Add mushroom steeping liquid and tomatoes.

Simmer for 60 minutes or longer. If freezing, cool and then freeze.

You can also use the crock pot on low 8 hours or high for 4 hours.

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Fillet Mignon and Red Wine Sauce (Reduction)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Sprinkle 2 pieces of filet mignon on both sides with salt and pepper.

Sauté in a very hot pan until first side is caramelized. Turn and repeat on second side.

Remove beef from sauté pan and place on ovenproof platter. Place in center of oven and cook/roast until meat thermometer measures 125 for rare or 140 for medium.

In the meantime, prepare red wine reduction. You will need to have an open bottle of red wine available and some beef or vegetable broth.

½ cup red wine
1 cup broth

Make sure that the sauté pan is still very hot but the heat is turned off. Add the wine and whisk to remove the fond from the pan. Turn the burner back on and continue to whisk, adding the broth. Cook until sauce is reduced and thickened to desired consistency. Fresh herbs can be added to sauce before serving.

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