

Cauliflower 'Steak' with Mushroom Peppercorn Sauce

Swick

Serves 2 | Active Time: 35 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour

Chef's Notes

Much of this dish can be made ahead of time—including the baking of the cauliflower.

Step 1: Preparing & Baking the Cauliflower

- 1 head cauliflower, leaves and stem trimmed*
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1 cup vermouth or dry white wine
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 tsp sea salt

To bake the cauliflower, first preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).

*NOTE: Do NOT core the cauliflower. The stem is needed to keep the 'steaks' intact. With the cauliflower sitting on its stem, cut in half through the middle. Trim the outer edge of each half to form a thick steak-like piece of cauliflower. Each piece should be approximately 1 1/2 inch thick.

In a 9×11 baking dish, mix together the garlic, stock, vermouth, bay leaves and salt. *Note: The amount of salt you add will depend on how salty your stock is to begin with. Taste for seasoning and adjust as necessary.

Place the cauliflower into the liquid and cover tightly with foil. Carefully transfer to the oven and let bake for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Ultimately, the time will depend on how thick the 'steaks' are and your oven.

Test the 'steaks' periodically. When a knife goes in somewhat easily the cauliflower is done. Note: The cauliflower should be cooked through, but still a bit firm. If it's too soft, it will fall apart during frying.

Meanwhile, go ahead and prepare the sauce.

Step 2: Preparing the Sauce

- 1/2 tbsp oil
- 1/2 tbsp non-dairy butter
- 1/4 cup shallots, minced
- 3/4 lb mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup brandy
- 2 cups stock
- sea salt, to taste

To prepare the sauce, first gather and prepare all of your mise en place.

Next, heat a large stainless steel fry pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the oil and butter, followed by the shallots. Let the shallots cook until they just start to brown, about 2 or 3 minutes. Then, add the mushrooms and a pinch of salt. Cook the mushrooms until they start to release their juices and start to brown, about 10 to 15 minutes.

At this point, carefully deglaze with the brandy and let cook for a minute or so, or until most of brandy has evaporated. Next, add the stock, turn down the heat and let simmer while you pan-fry the cauliflower 'steaks'.

Step 3: Pan-Searing the Cauliflower 'Steaks'

- 2 tbsp black peppercorns, crushed
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp non-dairy butter

Once the cauliflower is ready, carefully remove the foil from the baking dish, making sure you don't burn yourself from the steam.

At this point, remove the 'steaks' from the liquid and place onto a plate lined with paper towel. Blot the top of the cauliflower with paper towel as well. This step helps ensure you get a nice golden crust.

Next, crush the peppercorns on a cutting board—a heavy fry pan works well for this. Then, carefully place the cauliflower into the crushed peppercorns and gently press to ensure some of the peppercorns stick to the cauliflower. Flip and repeat on the other side.

Next, heat a large fry pan—or better yet, a cast iron skillet—over medium heat. Once hot, add the oil and butter, followed by the cauliflower. Let the cauliflower cook for about 4 to 6 minutes, or until golden brown on each side. Try not to fiddle with the pieces too much, otherwise the 'steaks' will start to fall apart.

Once done, set aside while you finish the sauce.

Step 4: Finishing the Sauce & Serving the Dish

- 2 tbsp slurry, or as needed
- 1/3 cup Cashew Cream (optional)
- sea salt, to taste

To finish the sauce, taste for seasoning, adding salt as needed. Next, add the slurry. For the slurry, either cornstarch or flour can be used. Slowly add the slurry until you reach a nice sauce-like consistency.

If desired add the Cashew Cream. Note that the cashew cream will change the color of the sauce. It will go from a rich dark brown mushroom color to a light brown-beige colored sauce. However, the taste of the sauce with the added cream is delicious!

As an experiment, you could remove some of the sauce from the pan, before you add the cream. Then, taste the sauce with and without the cream, to decide for yourself, which one you prefer the look and taste of.

If you are using the above Cashew Cream, note that you will likely want to add a bit more water to the recipe. For a very neutral flavored cream, you can omit the lemon juice and apple cider from the recipe if desired.

To serve this dish, place a 'steak' onto a plate and spoon over the hot sauce—drizzling a bit of the sauce around the plate if desired. Serve with your favorite sides and enjoy!