

Cauliflower 'Steak' w/ Peanuts & Herbs

Swick

Serves 2 | Active Time: 45 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Step 1: Making the Peanut Sauce | Optional

- 1 recipe Thai Peanut Sauce

Serving this dish with the Thai Peanut Sauce is optional, but HIGHLY recommended.

Note that the peanut sauce can be made a day or two in advance—just be sure to bring it to room temperature before serving. Also, note that you may need to thin it out a bit.

Any leftover peanut sauce can be stored for another use. For instance, it goes particularly well with dishes like fresh spring rolls.

Step 2: Preparing & Baking the Cauliflower

- 1 head cauliflower, leaves and stem trimmed*
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 cups stock
- 1/4 cup vermouth
- 1 stalk lemongrass, cut in half lengthwise
- 2 kaffir lime 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, kaffir lime 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.

For the stock, use a good vegetable stock or use this Faux Chicken Bouillon Powder to make a quick stock.

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 remaining ingredients for the sauce.

Step 3: Preparing the Mise en Place for the Sauce

- 2 shallots, thinly sliced into rings
- 1 1-inch piece ginger, peeled, finely julienned
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Thai green chile (jalapeño or serrano), thinly sliced into rounds*
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced on diagonal
- 1/3 cup mint, Thai basil and cilantro, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp dry-roasted peanuts, unsalted, roughly chopped
- 4 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 3 tbsp Fish-Less Fish Sauce
- 1 to 2 tbsp palm sugar, or sweetener of choice

As the cauliflower bakes, prepare the remaining mise en place.

*Note: Depending on how hot you like things, you can either use more or less chilies. You can also remove the seeds if desired.

Mix together the lime juice, Fish-Less Fish Sauce and palm sugar and reserve for later. Note: Adjust the amount of fish sauce depending on your taste. The amount used will also depend on whether or not you have used a different fish sauce.

Alternatively, here is another Fish-Less Fish Sauce that requires no cooking.

Step 4: Pan-Searing the Cauliflower 'Steaks'

- 1 tbsp oil

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 it onto a plate lined with a paper towel. Blot the top of the cauliflower with a paper towel as well. This step helps ensure you get a nice golden crust.

Next, heat a large fry pan—or better yet, a cast-iron skillet—over medium heat. Once hot, add the oil, 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 prepare the sauce.

Step 5: Making the Sauce & Finishing the Dish

- 1 tbsp oil

To make the sauce, preheat a frypan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the oil, followed by the shallots. Let cook for a minute or so and then add the ginger, garlic, and chilies. Cook for another 30 seconds or so then add the reserved lime juice mixture. Next, add the green onions and toss to combine. Let cook for another 30 seconds.

Once done, remove from the heat and add the fresh herbs and peanuts. Toss to combine and taste for seasoning.

To finish the dish, place a spoonful of peanut sauce onto a plate and spread out to form around. Place a cauliflower 'steak' into the middle. Top with the warm sauce and serve immediately.

Chef's Notes

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