

Christmas Roast – Simply Wonderful!

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What would Christmas be without the classic roast beef of Jolly Olde England, flanked by crispy potatoes, tangy horseradish, crunchy Yorkshire pudding and steamed winter vegetables!

The beauty of the roast is its simple preparation, requiring little attention while slowly roasting in the oven.

The one important thing about cooking a roast is temperature. Ovens are not all created the same, and heat differs from one to the other. Cooking times are suggestions. They can't be exact in every case. But using a good instant-read thermometer will be exact. They're well worth the investment if you don't have one. Recipes will generally tell you at what temperature you should stop roasting.

If not specified, remove the roast from the oven when the internal temperature is 5 to 10 degrees below the desired doneness.

Here are the temperatures for doneness:

- 125°-135° — rare
- 135°-140° — medium rare
- 145°-150° — medium
- 155°-160° — medium well
- 165° — well done

For a juicy and tender roast beef, it's best to serve it rare. Meat continues to cook after it has been removed from the oven, so remove the roast when it reaches the desired temperature and allow it to rest for 20 minutes after removing it from the oven.

This recipe, featuring the top sirloin roast, provides all the spirit of an elegant English standing prime rib roast dinner at a fraction of the cost.

Top sirloin is a wonderful cut for roasting; the drippings will provide the essentials for a decadent reduced wine sauce and traditional Yorkshire pudding.

When selecting a top sirloin, select Choice or a higher grade designation like Certified Angus, Top Choice or even Prime.

TRADITIONAL ROAST BEEF DINNER

1 boneless beef top sirloin roast (6-7 pounds)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 ounce olive oil

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6 to 8 garlic cloves

2 cups Merlot, dry

2 cups low-sodium beef broth

2/3 cup Port wine

2 tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 250°F.

Trim meat of any heavy fat cover in excess of 3.8 inch and any visible cartilage on bottom of roast. Some fat is essential for self-basting the roast as it cooks. Season all side of the roast with salt and pepper.

On the stove top, heat a heavy iron Dutch oven or deep skillet; add olive oil and garlic. Brown all sides of beef roast approximately 4 to 5 minutes on each side.

Place roast in pot in oven. When internal temperature reaches 110°F (in approximately 60-80 minutes), turn oven up to 500°F and continue until internal temperature reaches 130°F. This will provide a medium-rare roast with a nicely browned exterior and take up to 15 additional minutes.

Remove roast from oven, transfer it to a tray and allow it to rest for about 20 minutes. While it rests, a pan sauce and Yorkshire pudding can be prepared.

Pour off and spoon all excess fat drippings from the pan. Reserve, hot, for Yorkshire pudding.

Heat pan with remaining juices over medium-high heat, add Merlot and reduce by half. Add stock and Port. Scrape all browned bits from the bottom and sides of the pan. Reduce to about one cup. Strain and remove garlic. Add butter and serve.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING

1-1/2 cups flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup milk

1 tablespoon butter, melted

2 eggs

4 to 8 tablespoons reserved drippings from roasting pan

Preheat oven to 475°F.

Whisk together the flour, salt, milk, butter and eggs. Using a baster, drop a teaspoon or two of drippings into each cup of a muffin tin. Put the muffin tin in the preheated oven. When the drippings are sizzling hot, remove the tin and fill each cup 1/2 to 2/3 full with batter.

Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce oven temperature to 350°F and bake for 15 to 20 minutes longer, or until the popovers are puffed and brown. Serve hot.

Yields 12 large popovers.

HORSERADISH SAUCE

1/4 cup prepared horseradish

1/4 cup sour cream

1/4 cup mayonnaise

Combine all ingredients in bowl and serve with roast.

CRISPY ROAST POTATOES

6 medium-large potatoes, peeled, cut into quarters

1 tablespoon olive oil

Salt and pepper

Boil potatoes in salted water for 15 minutes, drain well. Return to pan and shake over heat to dry completely.

Heat olive oil in oven-proof skillet. Add the potatoes, turn to coat all sides. Then transfer pan to 350° F oven and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, turning once, until potatoes are golden brown. (This can be done while roast is “resting.”)

Season lightly with salt and pepper. Serves 6.

STEAMED WINTER VEGETABLES

3/4 pound baby carrots, peeled

4 medium new potatoes, quartered

6 Brussels sprouts, halved

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Place carrots and potatoes in steamer over boiling water. Cover and steam 6 minutes. Add sprouts and continue steaming 5 to 7 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Combine butter, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Toss with steamed vegetables. Serves 8.

GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

2 (10-3/4 ounce) cans Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup

1-1/2 cups milk

2 teaspoons soy sauce

1/4 teaspoon freshly-ground black pepper

4 (9-ounce) packages frozen cut green beans, thawed 2-2/3 cups French fried onions

Stir soup, milk, soy sauce, black pepper, beans and 1-1/3 cups onions in 3-quart casserole.

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Bake at 350°F 30 minutes or until hot. Stir. Top with remaining onions.

Bake 5 minutes more until onions are golden. Makes 12 servings.

To enhance this dish, cook 4 slices of bacon until crisp and crumble.