

Got champagne taste and a beer budget? Here's the cookbook for you. A great meal doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg. For the cost of burgers out, you can dine on Filet Mignon at home.

The Champagne Taste/Beer Budget Cookbook

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The Champagne Taste/Beer Budget Cookbook

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Introduction

Remember when money grew on trees? Well, on houses actually. Equity grew night and day. You made money while you slept. Everybody was a millionaire—or soon would be. You could afford to go out to a restaurant at the drop of a hat. You could pick up something fancy from the grocery store, pop it in the microwave, and dine like royalty. It was only money. Use all you want, the house would make more. Seems like only yesterday. It was.

Remember when you were in school or just starting out? You scrimped and you saved. Somehow you made it from paycheck to paycheck. Robbed Peter to pay Paul. Hit up Mom and Dad. Borrowed against your future. You finally got past that. Thank God those times are over.

They're back. It's not PB&J time...yet. But it is time to cut back. You can still treat yourself well. For the price of burgers out, you can serve chateaubriand at home. How about filet instead of fast food? A glass of wine at a restaurant or the whole bottle at home?

Here in *The Champagne Taste/Beer Budget Cookbook* you can learn how to prepare fine meals at home without fine meal prices. You invest your time and reap the benefits. Time is better than money; the IRS hasn't found a way to tax it. You are in charge. Meals come out the way you like them.

Home cooking is not only economical; it's good for you too. You pick the ingredients—go organic if you like. You prepare them your way. Leave out what you can't eat or don't like. Salt to taste, not to cost. Those prepared foods you've been eating are loaded with salt. It's a cheap filler. It spikes up the taste and hides a multitude of sins. You have nothing to hide. Add just enough.

Sample Recipes

Pork Filet Mignon

The most tender, tastiest morsel in the whole pig is the tenderloin. When it comes from a cow, the tenderloin is called fillet mignon.

Other languages use the same word for the cut whether it comes from a pig or a cow. Do they know something we don't know? Treat the pork tenderloin with the same tender loving care you would beef tenderloin, and it will reward your taste buds at least as well for half the price.

Slice the tenderloins into 1 1/4" thick medallions and cook them like beef tournedos. They're on the lean side, so they are best wrapped in bacon to increase their fat content and boost their flavor. Wrap them in bacon secured with wooden toothpicks. Cook them like beef steaks. Remove the toothpicks before serving.

As a tasty alternative try the following special preparation for your pork filet mignon. You and your guests will love it.

1 lb pork tenderloin medallions
bacon
salt – kosher if you've got it
butter or margarine
4 or 5 cloves of garlic—crushed
Worcestershire sauce
lime juice

Kitchen method

Add salt to a frying pan and preheat on high for several minutes.

Wrap 1 1/4" thick pork filet mignon slices with bacon and secure with toothpicks.

Cook the meat on high for 5 minutes. Flip the meat and drop the temperature to medium. Top the filets with the butter, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, and lime juice. Cook 3 to 4 minutes more.

Move to a warm platter, and remove the toothpicks. Scrape the brown stuff from the bottom of the pan and pour over the meat before serving.

Charcoal barbecue

Clean the grill. Light a charcoal pyramid with a four briquette by four-briquette base. Let the charcoal burn until it is lightly ashed over, and then spread the coals into an even layer about two briquettes thick using a trowel or a small hoe.

Lay the steaks on the grill directly over the glowing coals, and cook for 5 minutes. Flip the meat and shift it from directly over the fire. Top the filets with the butter, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, and lime juice. Cook 3 to 4 minutes more.

Move to a warm platter, and remove the toothpicks.

Gas barbecue

Clean the grill. Light the burners and preheat on high for several minutes.

Wrap 1 1/4" thick filet mignon slices with bacon and secure with toothpicks.

Cook the meat on high for 5 minutes. Flip the meat and drop the temperature to medium low. Top the filets with the butter,

garlic, Worcestershire sauce, and lime juice.
Cook 3 to 4 minutes more.

Move to a warm platter, and remove the toothpicks.

... with Bleu Cheese Sauce

Just when you thought it couldn't get any better ...

It's not just any sauce that can dress up filet mignon, but this bleu cheese sauce can. This is my most requested recipe. Friends tell me they whip up batches of the sauce and use it to boost the flavor of broccoli, cauliflower, baked potatoes and more. Double the sauce recipe if you like. It keeps all week in the refrigerator, though it seldom lasts that long.

Filet mignons

4 to 6 slices of pork tenderloin 1 1/4 " thick
6 – 8 oz Gorgonzola or Stilton cheese
fresh ground pepper
salt, kosher if you've got it

Sauce

3 tbsp dry sherry
1 1/2 cups sour cream
1 beef bouillon cube or 1 tsp granulated
1/2 tsp soy sauce
salt and pepper

Cut a pocket in the side of each slice of medallion. Cut small slices of the cheese—one for each medallion. Reserve the remaining cheese. Place one slice of cheese in each pocket. Sprinkle with pepper.

Seal with toothpicks.

Preheat a frying pan over high heat. Put salt –

kosher if you've got it – into the bottom. Add the meat and cook it for 5 minutes on the first side. Flip the meat over and drop the heat to medium low. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove the meat and keep it warm.

Add the sherry, soy sauce and sour cream to the skillet. Crumble the bouillon cube and remaining cheese and add them. Cook for a few minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Place meat on warm plate. Serve with the sauce.

All creative people want to do the unexpected. -- Hedy Lamarr

About the Author

Woodrow Wilson is a Caltech PhD chemist who learned to cook in self-defense. He could live the life of a starving student as long as he didn't have to taste it. Spoiled by years of his mother's home cooking he'd have to do better. Besides, his roommates wouldn't tolerate mediocre cooking. Dinner might not cost much, but it had better not taste like it didn't.

Wilson brings his creativity from the laboratory into the kitchen. Toying with recipes—adjusting ingredients to improve the taste or substituting ingredients for whatever he's out of—he presents new takes on old favorites. Cooking by the seat of his pants, and then reverse engineering the ones that turn out well, he produces some mouthwatering new taste sensations. His best results are presented in the pages that follow.

Wilson is a research scientist, an author, a Toastmaster, a husband, a father, and a grandfather. Visit his web site <http://www.woodrow-wilson.com> to learn more about him. As a special bonus, you'll discover new recipes posted there every month or so.

Cooking is really the oldest, most basic application of physical and chemical forces to natural materials. – Arthur E Grosser, Professor of Chemistry, McGill University

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