

STEAK SANDWICH

Growing up on Guam, we did not eat that much beef; if we did, it was the little bit that was cooked for barbeques or fiestas. At home, we usually had seafood since my dad was an excellent fisherman with his rod-and-reel and with his spear gun. We also had pork chops, Spam and corned beef of course. With all the parties, there were plenty of barbeque meat--ribs, chicken and pork belly. Thus, I did not know how to cook a good slab of steak.

After enjoying several hours of Food Network with the various chefs, I've learned that an excellent slab of steak (1) should be patted dry so it doesn't steam, (2) should not be turned with piercing tools like a fork or sharp tongs, (3) should be seared in a bit of oil on medium-high heat for at least 1 ½ minutes on each side, (4) should then be cooked another 2 to 4 minutes at medium heat on both sides depending on thickness, (5) that pink to red meat is so much better than meat cooked all the way through to brown, and finally, (6) if you are going to have steak once in a while, throw down the money and have a tender cut!

I was watching Ina Garten's Barefoot Contessa show on Food Network one day in early 2012 when I saw her make a steak sandwich. I reviewed her recipe, but noticed that she didn't marinate her steak. I used my favorite marinade from allrecipes.com to flavor the steak; caramelized onions in oil, brown sugar and water; and varied her mustard mayo.

Every single time I bite into this sandwich, I wonder why I wait so long to make it! It's delish and goes well with a side of raw veggies and my homemade ranch dressing.

This is a 5-step process: (1) marinate steak, (2) make the mayo, (3) caramelize the onions, (4) cook the steak, and (5) assemble the sandwich. The mayo can be made ahead of time. NO component should be excluded or it simply will not be the awesome sandwich we've been enjoying!

STEAK MARINADE

I use the "best steak marinade in existence" recipe on allrecipes.com by "kookie." This is one of those occasions when I prefer to use a small measuring pitcher. Measure your soy sauce and lemon juice together because they are the "thirds." Measure your oil and Worcestershire together because they are your "fourths." I replaced the olive oil with canola oil since I sear the steak at a high temp. Finally, I eliminate the "pika" or spicy ingredients for my kids.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

1/3 c. soy sauce
1/3 c. FRESH lemon juice
½ c. canola oil
¼ c. Worcestershire sauce
1 ½ tablespoons garlic powder
3 tablespoons dried basil leaves
1 ½ tablespoons dried parsley leaves

Set 2

2 lbs. tender-cut steak such as Angus beef New York strip steak

Tools: *blender, Ziploc freezer bag or marinating container*

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in set 1 in a blender. THE BLENDER IS A MUST for best flavor; it pulverizes the herbs.

2. Give it a whirl till the mixture is fully incorporated.
3. Place the steaks in the bag or in a container.
4. Pour marinade over the beef and set in fridge for at least 5 or 6 hours. Two to 4 hours is not sufficient!
Turn steaks a couple of times.

***NOTE:** I like my meat to be almost at room temp before cooking them so I keep them on my counter. The temp in my house is about 70 degrees. Keep in mind that not refrigerating your marinating meats increases your risk of bacterial infection.*

STEAK MAYO

I only had the grainy mustard on-hand so that's what I've always used in this recipe. I also prefer more sour cream. This will thicken as it mingles in the fridge.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

- 1 c. good-quality mayonnaise
- ¼ c. light sour cream
- 3 tsp. grainy Dijon mustard
- 2 small pinches of salt

***Tools:** small bowl, spoon, container with cover*

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all of the ingredients into the small bowl.
2. Use a spoon to mix very well.
3. Pour into the container then cover and set in fridge while the steak is marinating.
4. This may be made a day or two ahead of time.

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

Caramelized onions are quite delicious and are perfect with the steak and the mustard mayo. You do not want to brown the onions by "burning" them. Instead, you want to slowly cook the onions until they caramelize, browning from their natural sugars. This can take between 45 and 60 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

- 2 large, sweet yellow onions

Set 2

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 ½ tablespoons light brown sugar
- ½ c. water

***Tools:** sautee pan*

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut an onion in half, end to end. Remove skin and outermost layer.
2. Slice both ends off of each half. Make ½-inch slices, perpendicular to the ends so that you end up with semicircle slices.
3. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil on medium heat.

4. Add the onions then sprinkle $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt. Stir.
5. Cook and stir the onions until they become translucent and have reduced in volume.
6. Add 1 tablespoon of oil to the onions. Stir.
7. Add about 2 tablespoons of water then stir.
8. After 30 minutes of cooking, add the brown sugar and another splash of water.
9. Reduce the heat to about the 37th minute on the face of a clock if the onions begin to “burn.”
10. Continue to cook the onions, adding a tablespoon or two of water when they begin to look dry; do not use more than a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water.
11. Once onions are light brown and have significantly reduced in volume, they are cooked.
12. Place onions in a covered container if you are not using immediately.

THE SANDWICH

Set 1

2 to 4 tablespoons canola oil

Marinated steak

Set 2

Artisan Italian or French bread, the thick loaves

Mustard-sour cream mayo

Caramelized onions

Tools: *large sautee pan, 2 spatulas, 3 large dinner plates, paper towels or napkins*

DIRECTIONS

1. Drain the steaks in a colander for 5 minutes.
2. Line each dinner plate with a few layers of paper towels or heavy duty napkins.
3. Pat the top and sides of the steaks to absorb external moisture; don't press them too hard.
4. Heat the canola oil in the sautee pan on medium-high heat.
5. Once oil is smoking, add the steaks; ensure they are not too close together.
6. Sear the first side for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.
7. Turn to the other side for another 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, continuing to cook at medium-high heat.
8. Keep on this second side, but reduce to MEDIUM heat for 2 minutes if steak is about a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick; keep for 3 minutes if steak is closer to a 1-inch thickness, yielding reddish to pink centers.
9. Turn the steak back to the first side for another 2 to 3 minutes, still at medium heat. (*Note that raw meat increases your risk of bacterial infection. Cook longer on each side to reduce your risk.*)
10. Remove steaks to the last large dinner plate then cover the plate with foil. Set aside for 10 minutes so juices can move back to center of meat.
11. In the mean time, apply a light coating of mayo to one or two slices of artisan bread; lightly toast if the bread is two or more days old.
12. Place some onions on the bottom slice of bread.
13. Slice steak on the diagonal and place meat over the onions. Top with second slice of bread if desired.
14. Oh yeah, enjoy cuz it's delish!

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com.