

LEAN ROAST BEEF WITH MARSALA GRAVY

Start to finish: 2 1/2 hours (30 minutes active)
Servings: 6

- 2 1/2- to 3-pound top or bottom round beef roast
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons seasoning salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup beef stock, divided
- 1/2 cup dry Marsala wine, divided
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Use paper towels to pat the roast dry. In a small bowl, mix the garlic powder, seasoning salt and pepper, then rub the mixture all over the roast. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

Heat oven to 250 F.

Heat a heavy-bottomed skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high. Rub the oil over the roast, then set into the pan and sear on all sides until a crust is formed, about 15 minutes total. Transfer the roast to a rack fitted in a roasting pan.

Return the pan to the heat and pour in 1/2 cup of water. Simmer, scraping the pan with a wooden spoon, just until the pan is deglazed and any bits on the bottom are loosened. Pour the liquid into the roasting pan. Add half of the beef stock and marsala wine to the roasting pan. Set the roast in the oven and cook until it reaches 120 F to 125 F at the center, depending on desired finished temperature (which will be 10 degrees higher), about 1 1/2 hours.

Remove the pan from the oven and increase the heat to 475 F.

Once the temperature has been reached, place the roast back in the oven and cook until the top is nice and crusty, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, transfer the roast to a carving board, cover it loosely with foil and let it rest while you make the gravy.

To make the gravy, place the roasting pan over medium heat on the stovetop. Add the remaining wine and stock, then whisk to release any stuck bits on the pan. In a small glass, mix the cornstarch with 1/4 cup of water, then add to the pan. Simmer, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened. Slice the roast and serve with the gravy.

Nutrition information per serving: 270 calories; 90 calories from fat (33 percent of total calories); 10 g fat (3 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 95 mg cholesterol; 410 mg sodium; 3 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 1 g sugar; 35 g protein.



AP Photo/Matthew Mead

Lean roast beef with Marsala gravy.

Make a leaner, tastier beef roast

By **MELISSA D'ARABIAN**
Associated Press

In the world of beef roasts, marbling is king. The internal automatic basting power of tiny fat pockets melting into the meat is amazing.

So what are the options for roasting healthier, leaner cuts of meat? There's the pork tenderloin, which is the leanest choice. But it is so mild in flavor that it sometimes doesn't quite scratch the roast beefy itch. There's beef tenderloin, which also is super lean and a mighty tasty roast. But I can only imagine a world where I could justify spending over \$100 on my family's dinner on a regular basis.

So for our usual Sunday supper, I

turn to the top round or bottom round roasts, which are inexpensive and lean. But they do require a little extra care in order to compete with the flavor and texture of fattier cuts closer to the center of the cow.

After years of practice, I have a few tips:

- If you can dry age the roast for a couple of days in the refrigerator, the taste will be intensified and mimic higher quality cuts. Just pat the meat dry, sprinkle on some seasoning salt (or salt and pepper) and let it sit, uncovered, in the refrigerator.
- Let the roast sit at room temperature for an hour before cooking.
- Use a three-phase cooking method. First, brown the roast on all sides in

a large Dutch oven to create a tasty crust. Second, slow-roast at a low temp (250 F) until the internal temperature is about 10 degrees below your final liking (120 F for a final temp of 130 F, about medium-rare). Remove the roast, and raise the oven temperature to 475 F and finish the roast with a blast of heat for 10 minutes.

- Tent the roast and let it rest for 10 to 20 minutes before slicing thinly. Pour a little juice over those slices and you are in (thrifty, healthy) beefy nirvana.

Food Network star Melissa d'Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the cookbook, "Supermarket Healthy." <http://www.melissadarabian.net>

Seven tips for pairing great wine with hearty winter roasts

By **MICHELLE LOCKE**
Associated Press

Nothing pairs quite so well with a midwinter day as an herb-crust slab of meat roasting alongside a few root vegetables. And to toast that roast you'll want a rich, flavorful wine that can stand up to the snappiest of cold snaps.

Here, experts dish up seven tips to pair with heartier fare.

1. It's ok to order the Merlot

"The kind of roast meats I think of for the winter meal are rich, succulent and take over your whole mouth," says Doug Shafer of the Napa Valley's Shafer Vineyards, known for its classic reds such as Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon and Relentless, a Syrah blend named in honor of powerhouse winemaker Elias Fernandez.

Shafer might pick the Shafer 2013 Merlot for something like a slow-roasted lamb shank. Like a good roast, the wine is "flavorful, fruity and lush. It's why they're such great dance partners."

2. Take a saucy approach

Sauces have a big impact on wine pairings, so this can be a great way to narrow your choices, says Madeline Puckette, content director of winefolly.com and co-author of the recent book "Wine Folly: The Essential Guide to Wine."

If you have sauces that are on the sweet-and-sour side, including honey barbecue, finding a wine with a high fruitiness factor or a touch of sweetness will make sure the wine doesn't get lost in the sauce. For example, she says, "You'll be surprised at how awesome Lambrusco pairs with sweet-style barbecue ribs. Delicious!"

3. Get intense

"The key to making a great pairing with any dish is to match the intensity of the wine with the food," says Puckette. So, beef brisket is going to take a more intensely flavored wine than roast chicken. Some examples of wines that go great with brisket include Syrah, Pinotage (a grape found in many South African wines) and Cabernet Franc.

4. Be a member of the clean palate club

If you have a roast meat that's been marinated with vinegar and is saturated with flavor, a palate-cleansing wine is a good idea, says Puckette. That means a wine with high acidity that will freshen your palate, similar to lemonade or iced tea. For lighter meats, this could be a sparkling brut or a blanc de noirs. A sparkling white wine made with red grapes is terrific with turkey. For darker meats a sparkling rose fits the bill.

5. See red

There's some debate over whether "red with beef" and "white with chicken and pork" is an absolute or a rule made to be broken. For instance, as noted above, a white or rose sparkler



AP Photo/Eric Risberg

In this photo taken Feb. 1, a lamb shank dish with a Tuscan bean ragu, natural jus and gremolata is paired with Shafer Merlot and Relentless wines at the Bistro Don Giovanni restaurant in Napa, Calif.

can often be a great accompaniment to roasts. Still, Puckette says there are some wines that are definitely better left out of the winter pairing equation and that would include soft whites such as Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Viognier.

Pinot noir, with its lighter, red fruit character, is a good choice for roasted feathered game such as guinea fowl, pheasant, duck, squab or quail, says Richard Matuszczak, wine director at La Toque at The Westin Verasa Napa. "Some of these meats exhibit gamier flavors that can match the earthy qualities of Pinot Noir. The accompaniments here shouldn't be too bold; good Pinot Noir is more about subtlety and silk texture," he says.

For older, aged Cabernet Sauvignons, think about balancing that drier fruit character with a richer red meat like a medium-rare rib-eye steak, says Matuszczak.

Cabernet Franc from the Loire region in France has "a savory, herbal character that pairs especially well with green veggies," says David Castleberry, sommelier at the RN74 restaurant in San Francisco.

6. Sip, sip Syrah

Castleberry likes to pick wines that mirror the flavors of the roast. "I'm on a big Syrah kick right now," he says. "I think they are the perfect match, like a Tinder 'swipe right' match!" France has some great values from Crozes-Hermitage and Saint-Joseph,

two appellations in the northern Rhone wine region. Castleberry also likes Samsara wines from California's central coast.

Not in the mood for meat? Vegetables that take to roasting well, like sweet peppers, eggplant and mushrooms, can pair nicely with a Syrah, says Matuszczak. "I would prefer one with a few years of bottle age, when Syrah can begin to develop secondary aroma and flavor characteristics that remind me of things like black Kalamata olives and black pepper."

7. Think Italian

Roast meats and vegetables are "meant to be savored, eaten slowly and enjoyed over the course of time. The wine should be bold enough and hearty enough to stand up to the succulence of the meat while slowly opening and displaying a beautiful bouquet of complexity," says Eleonora Tirapelle, beverage director of the Black Barn restaurant in New York.

She suggests Sagrantino, a red grape native to Umbria in Italy. "Big, bold and elegant. One of my go-to vineyards is Colpetrone. They make a Gold Sagrantino di Montefalco in the best years that ages for almost five years before its release. Great wine." Serving roast chicken? From the same region she likes Perticaia's Rosso di Montefalco. "Full-bodied with wild raspberries and blueberries on the palate. It's sure to please."



Michelle Locke via AP

This picture taken Dec. 5, 2015, shows "El Grito Continua," a street sculpture in Tlaquepaque, a historic suburb of Guadalajara, Mexico.

Tlaquepaque Arts and crafts enclave near Guadalajara

By **MICHELLE LOCKE**
Associated Press

TLAQUEPAQUE, Mexico — Strolling the boutique-lined streets of this arts-and-crafts enclave near Guadalajara, Mexico, is like stepping into the brightly colored pages of a storybook.

Above, rainbow-colored bunting flaps beneath an often cerulean sky. Fantastical sculptures on the sidewalks cast stark shadows on the vivid yellow, white and terra cotta walls of the stucco buildings.

Even the name has an engaging rhythm — tuh-lah-keh-pah-keh.

And the best part is this fairy tale visit to Tlaquepaque's historic center includes tacos.

How to get there

Tlaquepaque, historically known as San Pedro Tlaquepaque, is a suburb of Guadalajara, capital city of the state of Jalisco. To get here from downtown Guadalajara you can rent a car or take a taxi. Another option is to take an open-air tour bus, <http://www.tapatiotour.com.mx>. Once in Tlaquepaque, head for the historic center. The main street is Independencia, which is lined with stores, galleries, restaurants and bars. You'll also want to explore the smaller side streets. A major landmark is the Jardin Hidalgo, a large plaza flanked by two colonial-era churches on Independencia and the Parian, 199 Calle Juarez, which is a block of restaurants and bars known for mariachi music, especially on weekends.

Where to eat

Casa Luna, at Independencia 211, is a restaurant is set in the courtyard of an

old mansion with art-decked walls and colorful lanterns hung above the tables, lending a warm glow at night. Live bands play during the dinner hour and the menu offers traditional Mexican cuisine with a high-end twist, like the duck carnitas tacos. Tlaquepasta, 139 Reforma, is also a popular spot. For a more casual experience, street vendors sell a variety of foods including sweet corn on the cob.

What to do

Shop: Independencia is lined with upscale boutiques selling handmade jewelry, pottery, glassware and home goods.

See: There are two ceramics museums. The Regional Ceramic Museum is at 237 Independencia. The larger Museo Premio Nacional de Ceramica Panteleon Panduro, 191 Prisciliano Sanchez, is named after Panteleon Panduro, considered the father of modern ceramics in Jalisco. Admission is free and the museums are open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, closing around 3 p.m. Sundays.

Sit: The Jardin Hidalgo, on Independencia between Guillermo Prieto and Francisco I. Madero, offers shady benches where you can watch the world go by. The garden is named after Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a key figure in Mexico's fight for independence, and there is a statue of him here. Two churches overlook the garden, the Parroquia de San Pedro and the larger Santuario de Nuestra Senora de la Soledad. If you visit in June, you may catch the celebrations of the saints' days of St. Peter and St. Paul, which include music, dance and fireworks.