

BLACKBERRY ROUND STEAK, STUFFED WITH BLEU CHEESE AND CANDIED PECANS

&

HIBISCUS FLOWER AND WINE SALAD

THE STEAK:

- 1 lb round steak, pounded thin
- 1 cup blackberry jam, with seeds
- 2 Tbsp. vodka
- Marinate for 12 hours in the refrigerator.
- Remove from refrigerator:
 - Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Jalapeno vodka to the marinade.
 - (see below recipe for jalapeno vodka)

Rest until room temperature.

1ST MORTAR AND PESTLE:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Rosemary
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Thyme
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt

Grind finely to powder

(reserve $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. for topping later)

2ND MORTAR AND PESTLE:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup candied pecans, crushed



Scrape the blackberry jam off the streak, and lay the steak flat. Don't worry, the blackberry flavor will have soaked into the meat over the 12 hours. Sprinkle the seasonings over the full steak (reserve $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp for the top). Then evenly spread the bleu cheese, and the crushed candied pecans over the meat.

Roll the steak into a tube with the seasonings, pecans, and cheese inside. Place the roll in a greased bread pan. Sprinkle with $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. of powdered seasonings, and extra blue cheese and pecans. Cover and bake at 350 for twenty minutes.

Uncover and roast under broiler for 3 minutes, until crisp surface, and melted cheese. (OR PREFERRED MEAT TASTES) (Always cook meat to correct internal temps)

SALAD & DRESSING:

When you know what kind of wine you'll be drinking with dinner, set aside $\frac{1}{4}$ cup to soak your fruits for the salad. I'm testing out a new rose, Sea Siren. For research, I swear.

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mixed dried fruits (raisins, cherries, cranberries)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup wine
- 3 dried hibiscus flowers

1. Soak for an hour.
2. Strain, and save the soaked wine.
 - Add 1 Tbsp. Olive Oil to the wine and
3. Whisk together for salad dressing.

SALAD:

- 1.5 cups mixed spring greens
- $\frac{1}{4}$ soaked dried fruits and flowers
- 2 Tbsp. Bleu Cheese
- Small handful of candied pecans
- Wine/fruit/oil dressing to taste



ABOUT THIS RECIPE:

This recipe is a work in progress. Part of why I experiment with these ingredients is because I have them on hand. When I'm trying to build a new recipe, it may take me a dozen tries. I usually start out with the base flavor (in this case, just the blackberry jam, vodka, and steak) then I build on top of the base flavors. The first round of just blackberry and steak needed something to balance it out. My first thought was a bright acid, like lime...but that ended up not working. Then I tried the heat from the jalapeno vodka, and that lifted the warmth—but then it needed more of a savory net to hold the flavors together on the palate. Adding rosemary, thyme, and blue cheese turned this steak into a savory, near dessert-like centerpiece. (Next iteration will try a glaze)

Read more on The Elder Glade Chronicles:

Rosemary and Thyme. Rosemary is always a win with earthy meats, and thyme is a perfect balancer for acidic fruits. I chose to powder them in the pestle with salt, to get a more even distribution to the flavor for the meat roll.

The steak came from a local beef share I purchased last autumn. I'm always looking for new ways to cook beef, and was hoping to find a near dessert-like flavor experience with local grass-fed beef. BEEF # 654

The Blackberry Jam was made by me, from local foraged blackberries. The base ingredient was used for the Orc's Blood Blackberry Liqueur I make; the jam is a byproduct of the liqueur process. I'm ever on the lookout for new ways to use these ingredients.

Jalapeno Vodka, was made here at the Elder Glade last autumn. It simply consists of one slivered jalapeno, and a half quart of vodka, slowly infused in the sunlight for several months. It turns out—its WAY TOO HOT for me to drink, even when I mix it, but it makes a great little heat kick to something like this dish.

I've almost always got candied pecans in the pantry. I've almost always got some type of blue cheese in the fridge. I try to stay stocked through the winter on staples I know I can use in several configurations and recipes.

The dried hibiscus flower was a new item I picked up at Trader Joes, and I've been trying to figure out new ways of using this interesting ingredient. It's sweet and chewy, and goes fabulously on salads. More to come on this one, I think.

Sea Siren rose. It's both sweet and dry. It worked well as the base for the vinaigrette for the salad. And it paired well with the blackberry steak. At twelve bucks a bottle it wasn't a bad purchase, but I do tend to like my roses on a bit more on the sweeter side. For what I used it for, I'd probably stock a couple of bottles in the pantry.

Read more about why I cook here: <https://www.athena-author.com/elder-glade-chronicles/blackberry-steak-stuffed-with-bleu-cheese-and-candied-pecans>