

Charcoal-Grilled Argentine Steaks with Chimichurri Sauce

From the episode: *Grilled Steak and Gazpacho*

Serves 6 to 8

The chimichurri sauce can be made up to 3 days in advance. Our preferred steak for this recipe is strip steak, also known as New York strip. A less expensive alternative is a boneless shell sirloin steak (or top sirloin steak). We prefer oak, but other types of wood chunks can be used. Flipping 3 times during cooking allows for even cooking and limits flare-ups. To substitute table salt for kosher salt, halve the amounts listed in the recipe.

INGREDIENTS

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1/4** cup hot water
- 2** teaspoons dried oregano
- 2** teaspoons kosher salt (see note)
- 1 1/3** cups loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 2/3** cup loosely packed cilantro leaves
- 6** medium garlic cloves , minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1/2** teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4** cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2** cup extra-virgin olive oil

STEAK

- 1** tablespoon cornstarch
- 2** tablespoons kosher salt (see note)
- 4** boneless strip steaks , 1 1/2 inches thick (about 1 pound each) (see note)
- 4** (2-inch) unsoaked wood chunks (see note)

Ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **FOR THE SAUCE:** Combine hot water, oregano, and salt in small bowl; let stand 5 minutes to soften oregano. Pulse parsley, cilantro, garlic, and red pepper flakes in food processor until coarsely chopped, about ten 1-second pulses. Add water mixture and vinegar and pulse briefly to combine. Transfer mixture to medium bowl and slowly whisk in oil until incorporated and mixture is emulsified. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature at least 1 hour (if preparing sauce in advance, refrigerate and bring to room temperature before using).

2. **FOR THE STEAK:** Combine cornstarch and salt in small bowl. Pat steaks dry with paper towels and place on wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet. Rub entire surface of steaks with cornstarch mixture and place steaks, uncovered, in freezer until very firm, about 30 minutes.

3. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal (6 quarts, about 100 briquettes) and allow to burn until coals are fully ignited and partially covered with thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Arrange coals in single layer over entire surface of grill and, using tongs, place wood chunks directly on top of coals, spacing them evenly around perimeter of grill. Position cooking grate over coals, cover grill, and heat grate until hot, about 5 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean with grill brush. Grill is ready when coals are hot (you can hold your hand 5 inches above grate for 2 seconds).

4. Season steaks with pepper. Place steaks on grill, cover, and cook until steaks begin to char, 2 to 3 minutes. Uncover grill, flip steaks, and cook on second side until beginning to char, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip again and cook first side until well charred, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip 1 last time and continue to cook until second side is well charred and instant-read thermometer inserted into center of steak registers 115 degrees for rare, about 2 minutes, or 120 degrees for medium-rare, about 4 minutes. Transfer to large plate and let rest, loosely tented with foil, for 10 minutes. Slice and serve, passing chimichurri sauce separately.

TECHNIQUE

KEYS TO SMOKY, CRISP-CRUSTED GRILLED STEAKS

Here's how we produced our own brand of smoky charred *churrasco*—even without the aid of a wood-burning Argentine grill.

1. USE THE RIGHT RUB

Rubbing the steaks with cornstarch and salt seasons the meat and expedites crust formation by drying the meat's exterior; cornstarch also enhances browning.



2. FREEZE BRIEFLY

The freezer's cold, dry air drives off exterior moisture and chills the steaks' interiors, so they can stay on the grill longer, soaking up more smoke flavor.



3. ADD WOOD CHUNKS TO THE FIRE

Four large chunks of unsoaked wood added to a single-level fire infuse the meat with wood-grilled flavor.



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