



© David Loftus

smoked beets with grilled steak and a cottage cheese dressing ingredients

main courses | serves 2

I came across this method of smoke-cooking beetroots slowly on the barbecue or in the hot ashes of a fire when I was in America. My recipe uses small beetroots, which are easier to peel and don't take as long to cook, and rosemary sprigs to protect the beets from the direct heat of the coals. Alternatively, you can roast the beetroots in the oven at 200°C/400°F/gas 6 for 1½ hours – they'll still taste lovely, but you won't get the wonderful smoky flavour.

First light your barbecue or fire. Lay the beetroots on a double layer of foil – about 30cm (60cm unfolded) – and sprinkle the rosemary leaves on top. Roll up the foil, folding in the edges and twisting the ends together. Stab the foil a few times all over with a knife to allow the smoke to get inside and flavour the beetroots. Lift the rack of your barbecue and carefully insert your foil package among the coals, making sure you place some coals on top too. Leave it to cook for 30 to 40 minutes, or until the beetroots are tender, then remove the package and allow it to cool down. Unwrap it and remove the beetroots, discarding the rosemary sprigs.

Once cooled slightly, peel the beetroots and discard the charred skin. Cut the beets into irregular chunks and place in a bowl. Add the vinegar, 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, plenty of salt and pepper and half the parsley and tarragon. Toss, have a taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

Put the cottage cheese into a bowl and add the juice and finely grated zest from half your lemon. Stir in 2 glugs of extra virgin olive oil, the thyme leaves and some salt and pepper and gently fold it all together, so the oil and lemon marble through the cottage cheese. Taste the dressing and squeeze in a bit more lemon juice if you like.

Lightly rub a little dressing on to your 4 steaks. Place them on the barbecue and cook to your liking, turning them every minute, then remove them to a plate and allow to rest.

To serve, divide the dressed beets between two plates. Top each

- 8 small beetroots, tops trimmed
 - a small bunch of fresh rosemary, leaves picked
 - 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 - extra virgin olive oil
 - sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - a small bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked and roughly chopped
 - a small bunch of fresh tarragon or basil, leaves picked and roughly chopped
 - 4 x 100g fillet steaks
- for the cottage cheese dressing
- 4 heaped tablespoons cottage cheese
 - 1 lemon, halved extra virgin olive oil
 - a few sprigs of fresh thyme, leaves picked

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Grilled steak recipe with smoked beets ...

plate with 2 steaks and a spoonful of cottage cheese dressing.
Scatter over the remaining herbs and enjoy!



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