



GRETCHEN MCKAY | PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE | TNS
Pan-seared Delmonico Steak and Mushrooms.

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Serves 4

PG tested

S'mores aside, is there anything more wonderful than a steak cooked over a campfire? This simple recipe requires just a handful of ingredients, but is quite elegant. Be sure to season the meat well, and start with a screaming-hot pan — you want the steaks to get a nice, solid char.

- 1 pound white mushrooms
- 1½ teaspoons each kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 boneless Delmonico steaks, each 12 to 16 ounces
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, plus a handful of thyme sprigs
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- ½ cup dry red wine
- ¼ cup salted butter

Wipe mushrooms clean with a damp paper towel, and trim to remove any tough stem ends. Cut into halves, or quarters if large. Combine salt and pepper in a small bowl. Sprinkle steaks with fresh thyme leaves and half of the salt/pepper mixture, pressing seasonings into meat.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat on a camp stove or over hot coals. Add mushrooms, thyme sprigs and remaining salt mixture. Cook, stirring often, until mushrooms are tender and browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, and tent with foil to keep warm.

Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in pan over medium-high heat. Cook steaks on both sides, turning once, until browned and done the way you like, 8 to 14 minutes, depending on thickness — 110 degrees for rare on an instant-read thermometer or 130 degrees for medium. Transfer steaks to cutting board and tent with foil to keep warm.

Discard fat from pan. Pour wine into the same pan and cook until reduced to 2 to 3 tablespoons, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk in butter until melted and blended. Cut steaks in half and set on plates. Drizzle with sauce and serve with mushrooms. — Adapted from “Camp Sunset: A Modern Camper’s Guide to the Great Outdoors” by the editors of Sunset (Oxmoor House, May 2016, \$24.95)

you don’t have to get that creative — portable grates are cheap and easy to find even at tiny camp stores.

Warm a large heavy frying pan — I used an 11-inch cast-iron pan — on grates until hot, then pour 2 tablespoons oil into pan. Toast pizza crust in pan, pressing down on the edges, until it is crunchy and golden brown on the bottom, about 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board, and cover with foil to keep warm.

Pour remaining 1 tablespoon oil into pan. Add onions, sausage and green peppers and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until onion and peppers are soft, and sausage is no longer pink, about 10 minutes. Remove mixture from pan into a bowl, and set aside.

Place pizza crust in pan with toasted side up. (I had to smooch the edges up the side of the pan.) Spoon the pizza sauce on top of crust, and top with half of the mozzarella. Spoon on half of the onion/pepper/sausage mixture and sprinkle half of the Parmesan on top. Top with remaining mozzarella and onion mixture, then add pepperoni and basil on top. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan. Return pan to grill, and cook, covered with foil, until the cheese melts and pepperoni gets crispy, about 5 minutes.

Transfer pizza to a cutting board, and slice. Serve hot. — Gretchen McKay

Loaded Campfire Pizza

Serves 4

PG tested

Yes, you can make pizza in the woods, so long as you bring along a pre-baked crust. My 12-inch Boboli crust was a little too big for my pan, but I simply pressed the excess up the sides. Feel free to experiment with your favorite toppings, but remember you’ll have to cook vegetables in the pan before placing them on the crust.

- 1 baked 12-inch baked pizza crust, such as Boboli
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 large sweet onion, sliced thin
- ½ pound sweet Italian sausage
- 1 large green bell pepper, sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup homemade or jarred pizza sauce
- 1½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 4 ounces sliced pepperoni
- Fresh basil leaves, chopped or cut into a chiffonade

Heat a charcoal or wood-fired grill to medium or build a campfire and allow flames die down leaving mostly white coals. If using a campfire, set grill grates on rocks or wet green logs.

Campfire

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scrambled with eggs and crumbled cheese.

When planning your menu, choose sturdy foods that will stand up to being packed tight in a cooler or tucked into the trunk with a tent and sleeping bags. For example, go with bananas for dessert instead of berries, and peppers and onions instead of lettuce.

A few tools are essential. Along with a sharp knife, tongs and a heavy oven mitt to keep your own mitts safe when cooking food over coals, you’ll need fireproof

cookware. Cast-iron is your best friend here — you can cook just about anything in it, either directly on coals, atop a grate or on a propane-fueled campstove, if you’re taking the easy way out. Aluminum foil, which can be fashioned into packets for roasting foods or shaped into a makeshift pan for frying, is another must-have.

A sturdy grill grate, either with legs or without, also is a good idea as it will allow you to elevate food and pans over the fire pit. On a recent camping trip to Cook Forest, my husband rigged up a grate out of two old gas-grill grates bound together with wire, which we then propped on rocks. But

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