

Veal with Strawberries & Basil with Blackberry-Basil Sauce

This recipe was created out of boredom and the desire to make something I had never seen on any other menu. It quickly became a guest and staff favorite.

I had been growing basil on the restaurant's patio and was not using it fast enough, and with New Mexico heat it had begun to bolt. Fresh strawberries were luscious and abundant, and they were spoiling faster than I could use them. (There was just so much strawberries over real short cake we could sell—even though we had sold a lot!) And my newest source of milk-fed veal was superb and priced just right. Those were the factors in my head as I tried to come up with something new. It worked so well, it has been on every summer menu since.

1½ lbs veal cutlet, pounded thin
to taste black pepper freshly ground
1 pint strawberries, sliced
2 Tbs fresh basil chopped

For the Blackberry-Basil Sauce

1 rd Tbs basil
1 cup water, boiling
1 cup blackberry preserves, seedless
1 tsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp shallots, minced
1/2 tsp fresh lemon juice
1/8 tsp black pepper freshly ground
1 pinch salt

Procedure

Sauce:

- Pour the boiling water over the basil. Steep for 20 minutes.
- Drain off the excess water.
- Place all sauce ingredients into a pot. Cook on a medium heat for 5-6 minutes until simmering, stirring with a wooden spoon. The Blackberry Preserves should be fully melted. Cool for 20 minutes. Blend, on high, until smooth.

Veal:

- Slice the veal into approximately 1" squares. Lightly coat with fresh ground pepper.
- In a large non-stick pan, add a little olive oil to just coat. Get the pan hot.
- Lay the veal in the pan and lightly color— when the edges look colored, turn over each piece. Cook about 1 minute more.
- Lay on a serving plate interspersed with the fresh strawberries.
- Drizzle the sauce over the plate—use about 1/3 cup; more if desired. Just don't drown the meat and berries.
- Garnish with the fresh basil. Serve immediately.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings