

Steak with Cream of Juniper Sauce

SERVES 4

1 (1 ¹ / ₄ -pound) beef sirloin steak (see Note)	1 cup veal stock or beef stock (preferably homemade)
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste	¹ / ₂ cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons olive oil	1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon unsalted butter	1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
2 shallots, minced	Chopped flat-leaf parsley for garnish
1 tablespoon juniper berries, crushed	
¹ / ₄ cup gin	

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: A medium skillet

Sprinkle the steak with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the steak. Cook for 3 minutes on each side or until brown but still pink inside. Remove to a warm dish and cover with foil. Reduce the heat to medium. Melt the butter in the pan drippings in the skillet. Add the shallots and juniper berries. Sauté for 1 minute or until soft. Add the gin and stock, stirring to deglaze the skillet by scraping the bottom to dislodge any browned bits. Cook for 5 minutes or until the stock is reduced slightly. Stir in the cream. Cook for 5 minutes or until the sauce is reduced. Add the rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper. Cut the steak against the grain and spoon the sauce over the top. Garnish with parsley.

Note: Astringent juniper berries are crushed to release their essence into this rich dish. Four 4-ounce beef tenderloin fillets may be used instead of the sirloin. Serve the fillets whole with the sauce.



Juniper

Juniper berries are best known as the primary flavoring in gin, but they have many culinary uses. Particularly popular in Northern Europe where they are used in marinades, sauces, sauerkrauts, and sausages, the berries are best when crushed, or bruised, before using. They have a strong, piney, cleansing aroma reminiscent of the outdoors, so they are perfect for cutting rich, fatty game meats such as venison, rabbit, goose, duck, and wild boar.