



# Pepper It Up With Peppercorns

by Barb Kemp

**S**tick your nose into a bag of peppercorns and drift into a bold pungent fiery world. Enjoy a place that heightens the senses and rewards the palate. It's an experience people world-wide have enjoyed for centuries.

Pepper is a must-have household spice. Just like coffee, it's best when freshly ground. For the ultimate pepper flavour purchase a good quality pepper grinder and purchase peppercorns from a reputable store that has a high turnover of spices.

What's the difference between black, white pepper and green peppercorns? All come from the same flowering vine. However, black peppercorn is picked off the vine before it has had a chance to mature. It is then dried, and the outside shell of the berry, which is green, shrivels up and turns black.

The unripe green peppercorn is picked and packed in either brine or water. The flavour is intense and combines well with cream sauces. Once opened, green peppercorns packed in brine will keep in the refrigerator for 1 month, and water-packed green peppercorns will keep for one week.

White peppercorn has been allowed to mature on the vine before it's picked. The outside shell is removed and the inside berry is dried. It is light tan in colour with a mild aroma and a hot flavour.

Enter into the world of peppercorns and excite your taste buds. It is the start of a life-long experience.

## Cracked Black Peppercorn Steaks

Serves 4

Serve with mashed potatoes and lightly steamed fresh vegetables.

- 4 rib-eye steaks
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp. cracked black pepper

Preheat barbecue. In a small bowl combine the olive oil and garlic. Brush both sides of steaks with oil and garlic. Press cracked black pepper evenly on both sides of each steak. Cook on barbecue until desired doneness about 6-7 minutes per side.

## Grilled Steak with Green Peppercorn Sauce

Serves 4

- 4 rib-eye steaks
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- ½ cup whipping cream
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. green peppercorns, drained and rinsed
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat barbecue. Lightly salt and pepper steaks. Place on barbecue and cook until done, about 6-7 minutes per side. While steaks are cooking, melt butter over medium heat in a small sauté pan. Add shallots and sauté until lightly brown, about 4 minutes. Add whipping cream, red wine vinegar, Dijon and green peppercorns. Lower heat and gently simmer. Season with salt and pepper. Serve steaks with a tablespoon of sauce spooned on top.

Barb Kemp writes Recipes To The Rescue Newsletter, a free publication for the everyday cook. For your free copy, e-mail [recipestotherscure@shaw.ca](mailto:recipestotherscure@shaw.ca)

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