

Steak with Creme Fraiche & Pepper Sauce

- 2 Sirloin steaks weighing about 8 oz (225 g) each, at least 1 inch (2.5cm) thick,
- 2 rounded tablespoons crème fraîche
- 2 level teaspoons black peppercorns, coarsely crushed
- 10 fl oz (275 ml) fresh beef stock**
- 2 tablespoons Cognac**
- 1 level teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon of oil & Sea Salt

First of all, you need to reduce the stock to half its original volume, so put it in a small saucepan and boil rapidly for about 10 minutes, then taste and add some salt if it needs it. Now measure the Cognac into a jug.

When the steaks are at room temperature, season them well with salt, then place the square frying pan over a high heat and, when it's really hot, add the butter and oil, which should start to foam immediately. Now drop the steaks into the hot pan and, keeping the heat high, give them 3 minutes on one side for medium or 2 minutes for rare. Use a timer and try to leave them alone – no prodding! Now turn them over and give them another 2 minutes on the other side for medium or 1 minute for rare. After that, pour in the Cognac, let it splutter and reduce, and follow it first with the reduced stock and finally the crème fraîche and crushed pepper. Give it all a good stir, then let everything bubble, reduce and amalgamate for about 1 more minute, then serve the steaks on warmed plates with the sauce spooned over.

