

Olive Stuffed Flank Steak/Tom Douglas

From *Tom's Big Dinners* (Morrow, 2003)

Makes 6 to 8 servings

2 tablespoons olive oil (plus about 2 more tablespoons for cooking the steaks)
1 cup finely chopped onion
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 cup pitted and chopped kalamata olives
¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat leaf parsley
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh thyme
½ cup toasted pine nuts
¼ cup currants
2 flank steaks (about 1¼ to 1½ pounds each)
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

To make the stuffing, heat the oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until soft and caramelized, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until aromatic, a few minutes more. Remove from the heat and transfer to a bowl. Stir in the olives, herbs, pine nuts, and raisins. Set aside to cool.

To prepare the flank steaks for stuffing, place one of the steaks on a work surface, cover it loosely with a piece of plastic wrap, and use a meat pounder to pound the steak about 1/3 inch thick. The surface area of the steak should increase by only about 25 per cent. Then, use your knife to score the steak in a criss-cross pattern, making 3 or 4 shallow cuts in each direction, not cutting all the way through. Turn the steak over to the unscored side and spread half the stuffing evenly over the surface of the steak, then roll it up the long way like a jelly roll. Using kitchen string, tightly tie the steak in 5 or 6 places to keep it securely rolled up. Season the outside of the steak with salt and pepper. Repeat with the other steak and the other half of the stuffing.

To pan-sear and roast the steaks, preheat the oven to 400°F. Pour about 2 tablespoons of olive oil into a roasting pan and straddle the pan over two burners on medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, put the steaks in the pan and sear them well on all sides, turning with a tongs, until nicely browned, about 6 to 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and remove the steaks to a plate. Discard any fat in the pan and scrape out and discard any burned bits that may have escaped from the stuffing. Put the steaks back in the roasting pan, put the pan in the oven, and roast, uncovered, turning the steaks over halfway through the cooking time (after about 7 to 8 minutes). When the internal temperature of the steaks reads between 120°F and 130°F on an instant-reading meat thermometer, after about 15 minutes total roasting time, remove the pan from the oven. Allow the steaks to rest about 5 to 8 minutes, then cut and remove the kitchen string.

Transfer the steaks to a cutting board and use a sharp knife (a serrated knife works well) to cut them into slices ½ to ¾-inch thick. Arrange the slices on a platter and pour any pan juices that may have collected over the top. Serve.