

11/12/09 - California Dreaming and Grilled Steak

Nothing is as tranquil as an unoccupied luminescent blue pool in the early morning light. The ambient temperature water envelops my body as I swim, methodically slicing through the placid liquid with the sides of my hands like a hot clean knife through chocolate cake. Classical music is entering my ears from beneath the water's surface. As I turn my head up to breath, I notice the Andalusian, Moorish details of the buildings surrounding the courtyard. Some of the dusky pink walls are bright with light and some cast in shadow as the fog lifts to brilliant blue skies.



Pool at the Alhambra, Spain

This weekend we had occasion to visit the Grand Del Mar Resort near the California coast. It sits nestled in some softly rounded undulating hills about 2 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. The hillsides are part rough scrub and part manicured golf course. The food served at the hotel was lovely. Abundant fresh fruit and

vegetables accompanied every meal. On Friday afternoon, at a culinary demonstration given by one of the young chefs several intriguing recipes were presented. Chef Scott demonstrated an heirloom tomato salad with fresh Burratta cheese, drizzled with olive oil and aged balsamic vinegar, sweet and thick with age. Next, the chef made a nouveau ratatouille to fill curved black crackers made with ground black forbidden rice. The baked crackers shaped like almond tuilles, were perfect to hold a scoop. The last dish he demonstrated was a philo triangle filled with ricotta and red grape halves. Baked and topped with roasted green tomatillo salsa they were very tasty. The resort sommelier paired the three appetizer selections with 3 different white wines. He chose a California chardonnay and two dryer European selections.

Well it is time to check out of this little piece of heaven. I feel relaxed and ready to return to my hectic life with that high decibel level that makes you appreciate the serenity of this place.

My boys are waiting at home for my barbecued steak.

Linda's BBQ Steak

4 prime rib steaks cut 1 and ½ inches thick

6 garlic cloves

3 tablespoons fresh lime juice



¾ inch fresh ginger root

1 jalapeño, seeded and cored

3/4 cup fresh cilantro

1/2 cup fresh mint

1/2 cup fresh parsley

3 tablespoons Sumac (ground)

1/4 cup olive oil

1 or more teaspoons fresh cracked pepper

Sea salt to taste

Set steaks in a dish. Place all other ingredients in a food processor and pulse together to make a paste. Generously smear marinade on both sides of steak.

Refrigerate steak for around 4 hours to absorb flavors of marinade. Heat a barbeque or grill to high heat. Place steaks on grill, all in the same direction.

Leave space around each steak for the heat to come up and around. If using an outdoor barbeque, close the lid. Grill for about 2 minutes, then, using tongs, give each steak a quarter turn or 90 degrees to make cross hatched grill marks. After another 1-2 minutes flip steak with tongs. Never pierce meat with a fork as this will make it dry.

Repeat the 90 degree turn on the second side and then test for doneness by pressing them. For medium rare, a steak should be springy soft. Soft soft is rare or bleu. Firm is well done, oops. Remove steaks from grill to a platter. Hide them from your hungry diners for 10 minutes. This is the key to juicy and tender!

You can serve whole individual steaks or slice them against the grain on a cutting board and just serve a few slices per person. To round out the meal any kind of rice and vegetable are great.

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