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Filet (or Faux Filet) with Cherry and Red Wine Sauce

When she's feeling splashy, a French home cook might pick up a couple of *tournedos* (beef tenderloins) from the butcher shop. But for a Tuesday night meal, she is more likely to pick up a *faux filet* (false filet), a cut that comes from the section right next to the tenderloin but isn't as tender – or as expensive. In my experience, American cuts that stand in best for *faux filet* include top sirloin and top loin (strip) steaks, though the French versions are usually cut thinner. While a sirloin may not have the divine tenderness and melt-in-the-mouth appeal of filet mignon, it can be a chic little piece when you dress it up with this sweet-tart pan sauce.

Makes 4 Servings

4 (6-ounce) sirloin, top loin, or tenderloin steaks (1 inch thick)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 large shallot, finely chopped (about 1/4 cup)

3/4 cup low sodium beef broth

3/4 cup dry red wine

1/3 cup dried tart cherries

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves

1. Season both sides of the steaks with salt and pepper. In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium-high heat. Add the steaks and cook, turning as needed, to the desired doneness (10 to 12 minutes for medium rare); reduce the heat as necessary if the meat browns too quickly. Transfer steaks to a platter and cover with foil to keep warm.

2. Add the shallot to the skillet and sauté briefly, until translucent. Add the beef broth and red wine to the pan and cook, stirring with a whisk to loosen any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the cherries and vinegar and bring to a boil. Boil until the liquid is reduced to 1/2 cup – this should take 4 to 5 minutes, depending on the heat and your pan size. Whisk in the remaining 1 tablespoon butter. Stir in the thyme. Season the sauce with additional salt and pepper.

3. Divide the steaks among four dinner plates, spoon the sauce over the steaks, and serve.