

What's Cooking at CAB

With Chef Michael Ollier

Kids in the kitchen and the classroom

As the summer winds down, I'm trying to enjoy some extra bits of time with my sons before they head back to the classroom this fall.

My last couple of months of summer were also spent with some of your kids at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo. All I can say is, "Wow!" This was my first time at a national cattle show, and I was blown away by how dedicated and passionate these students were about their animals, the show and the contests. Most chefs never get a chance to see that side of the beef business, but I wish more did. Seeing how respectful and serious the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) contestants were about their animals was certainly an eye-opening experience for me.

Hopefully, the All-American CAB Chef's Challenge expanded some Cook-Off participants' view of my world in return. This was the first year we featured a "secret ingredient" in this division of the contest. The tri-tip roast was revealed as the featured ingredient at 9 a.m. the morning before the contest. In addition, the adult division had to include poblano peppers and mushrooms; corn and rosemary for the juniors. They had a day to come up with a recipe, then prepare it in front of myself, the other judges and an audience.

The tri-tip roast was chosen as the secret ingredient simply because it is such a unique cut. It's more common in far western states, but it's generally a loin cut that goes unnoticed. That's unfortunate, because it is a tender, flavor-packed piece of meat that can be used a lot of different ways. Most people hear the word "roast" and instantly think it needs to be slow-cooked or braised. Not true. The best part of a tri-tip is the great contrast in flavors and textures you get from charring the outside on high heat, then letting it finish cooking with indirect heat.

If you get a chance between shows to fire up the grill one more time before sending the kids back to school, give this winning recipe a try. Myrna Sharpe of Minnesota and Jennifer Sharpe of Colorado got this tri-tip just right.

Congratulations again to Myrna and Jennifer on their winning recipe — I hope you all enjoy it as much as I did judging it. Congrats to all the other winners and participants in the NJAS Cook-Off. It was a pleasure to work with all the participants, and I am so grateful that I got to spend a week in your shoes at a cattle show.

That's what's cookin' at CAB!
Until next time,
— Chef Michael



PHOTO BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

► Chef Michael Ollier (white frock) helped judge the first-ever Chef's Challenge at the 2010 National Junior Angus Show.

Grilled CAB Tri-Tip with Ancho Seasoning and Roasted Southwest Vegetables

3 lb. *Certified Angus Beef*® Tri-Tip roast
2 ears sweet corn
2 small zucchini, cut lengthwise in half,
then crosswise into ¾-in.-thick slices
2 poblano peppers
1 red bell pepper
¾-1 lb. fresh mushrooms
½ tsp. minced garlic
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. black pepper
crunchy tortilla strips

Ancho Seasoning
¼ cup kosher salt

3 Tbs. ground ancho chili powder
2 Tbs. ground cumin
2 Tbs. garlic powder
2 Tbs. coarse-ground black pepper
2 Tbs. sugar
1 Tbs. ground thyme

Dressing
2 Tbs. fresh lime juice
2 Tbs. olive oil
2 tsp. brown sugar
1 poblano pepper, roasted
¼ tsp. ground cumin
¼ tsp. salt

Instructions:

Combine the ancho seasoning ingredients in a small bowl; press evenly onto beef roast.

Roast peppers on grill by lightly coating with oil. Place on grill for 5-7 minutes, turning occasionally. Remove peppers when they have blackened completely and place peppers in a paper bag and close. After 15-20 minutes, scrape off and discard the blackened skin. Remove seed pod, stem and inner ribs. Set aside.

Place roast on hot grill (500°-550° F) for 5 minutes. Reduce temperature of grill and grill covered for 25-30 minutes for medium-rare (140°) to medium (155°) doneness, turning occasionally. Let stand for 10 minutes.

Combine dressing ingredients in food processor. Set aside.

Roast vegetables on the grill. Cut corn kernels from cob. Slice roasted peppers. Combine vegetables with salt, pepper, garlic and cilantro in a pan and keep warm on the grill.

Carve roast across the grain into thin slices. Serve with vegetables and drizzle with dressing. Top with crunchy tortilla strips.

