CZECH

Svíčková

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Complex	**6**	**45 min**	**2 hr 30 min**	**Braise**	**Outside round**

Ingredients

- 1.2 kg (2⅔ lb) outside round roast, in one piece
- 100 g (3½ oz) smoked bacon, cut into strips (for larding, optional)
- 2 tsp salt and 1 tsp black pepper
- 3 tbsp lard or oil
- 2 carrots, 1 parsnip, ½ celeriac (celery root) and 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 5 allspice berries, 8 peppercorns, 3 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp mustard
- 750 ml (3 cups) beef stock, plus water as needed
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 250 ml (1 cup) sour cream
- 1 tbsp all-purpose flour
- Cranberry sauce, whipped cream and lemon slices, to garnish
- Bread dumplings (knedlíky; or thick slices of crusty bread or boiled potatoes), to serve

Steps

1. Rub the beef with salt, pepper and mustard. Poke deep holes with a knife handle and push in the bacon strips if using.
2. Heat the lard in a heavy pot over medium-high heat. Sear the meat for about 10 minutes, until browned all over. Move to a plate.
3. In the same fat, cook the root vegetables and onions over medium heat for 10 minutes, until golden. Add the allspice, peppercorns and bay.
4. Set the beef on top of the vegetables. Pour in the stock so it comes halfway up the meat. Cover and braise on low heat (or in a 160°C or 325°F oven) for 2 to 2½ hours, turning once, until a skewer slides in easily.
5. Take out the beef, wrap in foil and keep warm. Discard the bay leaves.
6. Purée the vegetables and cooking liquid with a stick blender until smooth. Add the vinegar and sugar to balance the flavour.
7. Whisk the flour into the sour cream, then stir into the sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes over low heat, stirring, until velvety. Add water if it is too thick.
8. Rest the beef for 10 minutes, slice it thinly, and ladle the sauce over. Garnish with cranberry sauce, cream and lemon.

Notes

- **Authentic cut:** traditionally made with beef tenderloin (svíčková means "sirloin" or "tenderloin"); outside round is the everyday version.
- **Smooth sauce:** blend longer for a silkier result, or pass through a sieve.

- **Make ahead:** the sauce and meat both improve after a night in the fridge.
- **Slow cooker:** brown the beef and vegetables, then cook on low 8 hr. Purée and finish the sauce on the stove.
- **Freezer:** freeze the sliced beef in a little stock for 3 months; make the sour cream sauce fresh, as it can split.