LAMB

NATURALLY PRODUCED, SHEEP EAT A MAINLY GRASS FED DIET, EXCEPT DURING THE WINTER WHEN THIS MAY NEED TO BE SUBSTITUTED WITH DRY FEED. NO HORMONE TREATMENT IS USED. LAMB IS A VERY SEASONAL PRODUCT, ASK YOUR BUTCHER FOR DETAILS OF AVAILABILITY.

Sheep are perfect livestock for hills and moors an ideal animal to help with biodiversity and the environment. They are hardy animals and mainly live outdoors regardless of the weather.

Lamb has a distinctive flavour from other meat products and is often the choice of people who enjoy good food. The taste of the meat is highly influenced by the feed, for example salt marsh and heather fed lambs have a distinct taste. Older lamb, also known as Hogget, often has a more pronounced flavour. Mutton is the name given to meat from sheep that are several years old and has a strong and specific flavour.

Lamb is a very versatile meat. For centuries lamb gigots and shoulder roasts have provided the opportunity for families and friends to gather around the table. Lamb joints are also often used in slow cooking recipes. Cutlets or rack of lamb are seen as the prime cuts and are well known by consumers, but there are many other cuts which may be less well known, so ask your butcher for advice. Lamb mince is a great favourite with the whole family, especially children. Mince is the base for various popular recipes such as lamb burgers and Moussaka. Stewing lamb also makes it very versatile, popular all over the world stews offer a large variety of recipes from curries to tagines or hot-pots.

Lamb is a good source of vitamins and essential minerals and is ideal as part of a healthy balanced diet.

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LAMB AND CARAMELISED ONION AND THYME SALAD BOWL

Serves: 2 Preparation: 10 minutes Cooking: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

200g cooked cold lean roast lamb i.e. leg or chump, cut into wafer thin slices

3 tbsp olive oil

1 clove garlic, crushed

2 slices rustic bread i.e. ciabatta, torn into croutons

1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced

½ iceberg lettuce, shredded

2 tomatoes, deseeded and sliced

4 baby beetroots, quartered

2 tsp freshly chopped thyme or 1 tsp dried

2 tbsp white wine vinegar

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

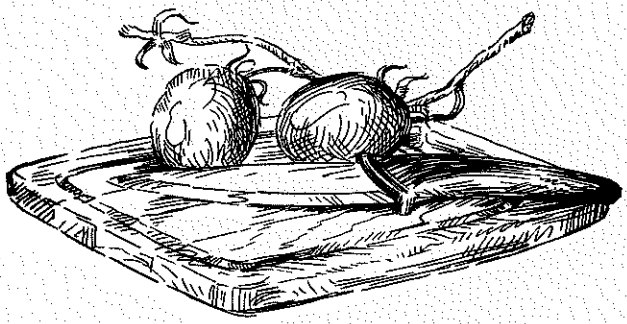
METHOD

Heat 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan and fry the garlic and torn bread until the croutons become golden and crisp. Transfer the croutons onto kitchen paper to drain.

Add the remaining oil to the pan and over a low heat, gently cook the onions until they soften and caramelise and without burning turn a rich golden brown. Be patient as this could take 10-15 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Meanwhile layer the lettuce, tomatoes, beetroot and croutons in a salad bowl topping with the sliced lamb.

Drain the onions well and spoon over the lamb. Stir the white wine vinegar and thyme into the warm pan juices; mix well then drizzle over the salad.



LAMB CUTLETS ON MINTED PEA PUREE

Serves: 4 Preparation: 10 minutes Cooking: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

12 - 16 lamb cutlets, French trimmed

1 tbsp olive oil

3 tbsp whole fresh mint leaves

For the purèe:

100g salad (waxy) potatoes

200g fresh or frozen peas

6 tbsp half fat crème fraîche

2 tbsp freshly chopped mint

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

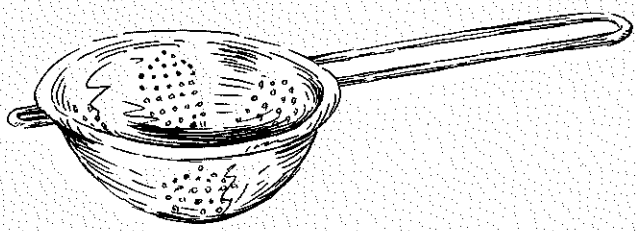
METHOD

To make the purèe, cook the potatoes in a saucepan of boiling water for 10 minutes or until just tender. Add the peas and continue cooking for 5 minutes until both the vegetables are tender.

Drain thoroughly, add the crème fraîche, chopped mint and season with a little salt and pepper .Use a hand blender or processor to whip to a purèe still retaining a little texture. Cover and return the saucepan to a warm hob.

Meanwhile heat the olive oil in a frying pan and fry the mint leaves until crisp. Transfer to absorbent kitchen paper. Fry the cutlets in the hot oil for 4-6 minutes on each side - they are best served slightly pink.

Place the minted pea purèe on warm serving plates. Top with the lamb cutlets and the crispy mint.



GREEK STYLE LAMB WITH LEMON AND OREGANO

Serves: 4 – 6 Preparation: 10 minutes Cooking: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

750g lean lamb i.e. chump or boned leg, cut into large chunks

4 tbsp olive oil

4 red onions

1 bulb garlic, separated into cloves, skin on

300g salad potatoes, halved

2 lemons, quartered

1 tbsp freshly chopped thyme or oregano

Freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 190°C.

Heat half the oil in a shallow roasting tin. Arrange the lamb in a single layer, season with black pepper and scatter on the fresh herbs. Cover tightly with foil and cook for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile cut the onions into quarters leaving the roots intact. Add to the lamb with the potatoes and garlic, tossing lightly in the pan juices. Tuck the lemon quarters in around the lamb.

Return the roasting tin to the oven, uncovered, and cook for a further 30 minutes or until the lamb and potatoes are tender and well coloured.

Divide onto warmed plates. Squeeze some garlic pulp out from the skins and mix in with any pan juices before drizzling over the meat.

TASTY TIP

To make a Greek salad chop some tomato, cucumber, red onion and fresh coriander and mix with a handful of rocket leaves and a few olives. Topping with crumbled feta cheese is optional but traditional!

LAMB AND FETA FILO PIE

Serves: 4 Preparation: 15 minutes Cooking: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

400g lean minced lamb

25g butter, melted

4 - 6 large sheets of filo pastry

½ tsp ground cinnamon

1 bunch spring onions, chopped

3 tbsp raisins or sultanas

100g Feta cheese, crumbled

3 tbsp freshly chopped parsley, dill or mint (or a mix of all)

1 egg, beaten

Freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 190°C.

Lightly grease an 18cm round spring-form tin with some butter then line with the sheets of filo, brushing between each layer with a little butter, saving a little for the top. Let the surplus filo overhang the tin.

Stir-fry the minced lamb in a frying pan until it becomes brown and crumbly. Stir in the cinnamon and spring onions, cooking for a minute or two more.

Remove from the heat and add the remaining ingredients. Season with black pepper. (No need to add salt as the feta is quite salty). Spoon the mixture into the filo-lined tin folding the surplus pastry over the top, scrunching it together loosely. Brush with the remaining melted butter.

Bake for 30-40 minutes or until golden and crisp on top. Leave to rest for 10 minutes before carefully removing from the tin. Serve at room temperature.

SIMPLY MOROCCAN LAMB

Serves: 4 Preparation: 15 minutes Cooking: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

450g boned shoulder or leg of lamb, cubed

1 tbsp olive oil

2 onions, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, chopped

2 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp ground cinnamon

3 large firm tomatoes, skinned and chopped

600ml hot lamb or vegetable stock

3 tbsp sultanas

1 tbsp freshly chopped coriander or oregano

2 lemons

METHOD

Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the meat in batches and stir-fry to seal and brown. Add the onions and continue to cook for 2-3 minutes or until the onions have coloured slightly.

Add the garlic, coriander and cinnamon, gently stir-fry for a further minute then pour on the hot stock. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes.

Stir in the tomatoes, sultanas, chopped herbs and the juice of 1 lemon. Gently simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes or until the meat is tender.

Serve with extra wedges of lemon for squeezing over...

TASTY TIP

This recipe tastes just as good made with beef either rump or sirloin, or for a slow cook method use chuck steak or blade of beef, as above and transfer to a preheated oven at 150°C, cover and cook for 2 hours or until the meat is tender.

Add 2 tbsp toasted pine nuts to either the stew or the couscous and substitute the sultanas for ready to eat dried apricots or prunes.

LAMB CURRY IN A HURRY

Serves: 2 Preparation: 5 minutes Cooking: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

200g lean lamb i.e. neck fillet or leg steaks, cut into thin slices

2 tbsp olive oil

1 red onion, halved and sliced

2 tsp ready prepared ginger from a jar

1 tsp ready prepared chillies from a jar

1 tsp ready prepared garlic from a jar

1-2 tsp Garam Masala or mild curry powder

3 ripe tomatoes, chopped or 200g can chopped tomatoes

3 tbsp natural yoghurt

Fresh herbs or shredded cucumber, to garnish

METHOD

Heat the oil in a frying pan or wok and stir-fry the lamb and the onion for 2-3 minutes until the meat is browned.

Add the ginger, chilli and Garam Masala, cook gently for a further minute.

Stir in the chopped fresh or canned tomatoes with 4 tbsp water, simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until the sauce has reduced and thickened slightly. Return the meat to the sauce and simmer for a further 3-4 minutes.

Just before serving stir in the yoghurt. Spoon into bowls and garnish (optional).

TASTY TIP

This curry is a nutritious, low fat recipe. To build on for extra servings or just variety... add a handful of baby spinach leaves, cauliflower florets, sliced red peppers, drained canned chickpeas, sliced mushrooms - anything healthy that is handy!

BRAISED LAMB SHANKS WITH LEMON AND GARLIC

Serves: 4 Preparation: 10 minutes Cooking: 1½ - 2 hours

INGREDIENTS

4 lamb shanks

1 tbsp olive oil

1 large carrot, diced

2 celery sticks, diced

2 tsp fresh chopped thyme

8 garlic cloves, diced

Grated zest of 2 lemons

1 tbsp tomato purée

400g can chopped tomatoes

600ml lamb stock or white wine (or combination of both)

2 tsp balsamic vinegar

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Heat the olive oil in a flameproof casserole dish and brown the shanks all over. Set aside. Add the carrot and celery to the oil, cook for 5 minutes or until softened but not coloured.

Add the thyme, garlic, lemon zest and purée and cook for a further 2 minutes. Pour in the tomatoes and stock (or wine), bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes.

Return the shanks to the simmering braising liquid. Cover and cook in the oven for 1½ -2 hours or until the meat is tender and coming away from the bone.

Transfer the shanks to a warm dish and place the casserole dish on the hob and boil to reduce slightly, checking the consistency and seasoning. Add the balsamic vinegar to bring out the flavours.