

## LAMB ON THE GRILL

One of my favorite things to cook on the grill or barbecue is lamb. Somehow it seems that the barbecue takes an ordinary cut of lamb and just gives it a special flavor. Almost any cut of lamb works fine on the grill.

I recently went to a barbecue where the cook, an Argentine cowboy, cooked an entire young sheep over an open fire. The sheep had been butchered and cleaned and split down the center and held open by a wood frame, and was suspended at an angle over a small wood fire, which was kept burning for at least eight hours to my knowledge. The slices were delicious—moist and succulent.

All sorts of cuisines barbecue lamb, particularly those countries that border the Mediterranean. And lamb has a particular affinity for rosemary as you can see in this Mediterranean-style recipe for lamb kabobs. Make a marinade by whisking together 1/3 cup dry red wine, 1/3 cup olive oil, 1/4 cup chopped fresh rosemary, three cloves of garlic put through a garlic press, and a good pinch of salt and some freshly ground black pepper.

Cut the meat off a 3-plus pound leg of lamb, trim off as much of the fat as you can, and cut the meat into 1 1/2 inch cubes. Spread the meat out in a 13x9 inch glass baking dish and pour the marinade over the lamb, mixing it well with the meat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Soak 24 bamboo skewers in some water for a half hour, and peel and cut 6 small onions into wedges. Alternating meat and onion, thread the lamb onto the skewers, using 2 skewers per kabob, spaced about a quarter inch apart. This makes the kabobs much easier to turn. Grill the lamb over medium-hot coals, turning often, for about 10-12 minutes. This serves 6.

I also like to grill a whole butterflied leg of lamb. I got the idea for this recipe by listening to Narsi David's cooking show on KCBS years ago. Puree a small onion in your blender, and add 1/3 cup of olive oil, a tablespoon of lemon juice, a pinch of salt and some freshly ground black pepper, and 1/4 cup of pomegranate molasses. Pomegranate molasses can be found at any Middle Eastern grocery store, or you can make some by boiling down 1/2 cup of pomegranate juice mixed with a couple of tablespoons of sugar until reduced by half.

Have your butcher butterfly a 3 1/2 pound (more or less) leg of lamb, and finish trimming off the fat yourself. (One of the secrets to cooking good lamb is spending the time to trim off the fat thoroughly.) I also like to pound the leg a little bit with a heavy cast-iron skillet until it is somewhat closer to being the same thickness all over. Don't get carried away, however.

Put the butterflied leg into a 13x9 glass baking dish and pour the pomegranate marinade over it, turning it a couple of times and even rubbing the marinade into the meat to make sure it coats the lamb thoroughly. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

When ready to cook, remove the lamb from the marinade, wipe dry, and save the marinade. Prepare your barbecue for indirect cooking. Sear the lamb over direct heat for a couple of minutes a side, then place the lamb, skin side down, over the drip pan away from direct heat and close the lid of your barbecue. Cook for about 45 minutes, brushing from time to time with the reserved marinade. Remove the lamb from the grill and cover tent it with foil, letting it rest for about 10 minutes before carving it into slices.

Taking a cue from India, try rubbing some lamb chops—any cut—with a spice paste made of a teaspoon of freshly grated ginger, two large cloves of garlic put through a press, and 1/2 teaspoon each ground cumin, coriander, turmeric and salt. Let the chops sit out for a couple of hours before cooking, or overnight in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Grill them quickly directly over the coals, letting them rest briefly after cooking before serving. This is Steve Muni for the Hometown Kitchen.