

## BARBRECK LAMB

Elsbeth, Sandy's mother was a farmers wife for 30 years and there isn't anything she doesn't know about how to cook a delicious meal using fresh meat from the farm. We have asked her to share her knowledge and below is a description of what she would do with each cut plus a few tried and tested recipes:

Beat the supermarket at its own game  
Add pleasure to your meals  
Rid Scotland of inferior imported meat  
Buy local top quality meat  
Read this leaflet for simple tips  
Enjoy the feeling that you are buying fairly priced produce  
Call your friends and tell them about us  
Karma in your kitchen!

Once you have purchased your lamb, you should be straining at the leash to get it cooked. For those of you who are not used to cooking fresh farm grown meat, here are a few suggestions for making the most of every scrap of lamb you have bought:

The taste of lamb is so excellent in itself, that the **roasting joints (gigots & shoulders)** need no added flavours. Simply rub a little salt over the skin of a leg or shoulder and bung it in a moderate to hot oven (average timing 20 minutes to the pound and 20 minutes extra) until it is cooked as you like it. Two additions if liked could be a few slivers of garlic pushed under the skin, or a sprig of fresh rosemary placed underneath – both before cooking of course!

An alternative (and great for getting the best gravy – but you don't get crunchy fat) is to pot roast the joints; and for this method you can include rolled joints, such as shoulder or rolled breast. All you do is brown the meat on all sides in some good oil, such as sunflower, in a suitable saucepan, and when all sizzly and brown, add enough water to cover the base of the pan. Jam on the pot lid, and when the water is boiling, turn the heat down, and leave to cook, poking occasionally. You must keep an ear open, because if you hear frying noises from within the pan, it means the water has all evaporated and you must add more. This method is slowish, but the wonderful juices left in the pan, in addition to the resulting tenderness of the meat, are worth the anxiety of listening for warning noises. Again, you can flavour the lamb with herbs of your choice and seasoning – but be careful the water doesn't run out on you, because burnt herbs do NOT improve the dish!

The **loin chops** are the most tender and succulent of the small cuts, and can be grilled quickly, or fried equally quickly. They should not be overcooked as they lose flavour and can become rubbery (rather like an overcooked scallop!).

And now we come to the 'knees and elbows' – those pieces of meat which you never find in the butcher's shop or on the supermarket shelf – but which can produce the most scrumptious dishes and soups at very little cost. These are the **shanks** (the equivalent of our forearms and calves), the **flank** (thin end of the rib), and the **neck fillets**.

'Kleftiko' – or 'Stolen' in Greek was invented by Greek Cypriot guerillas when hiding out in the hills inventing ways of harrying the Turks. This is made with the **shank** of the thieved lamb, and is virtually the same as pot roasting – only they used a lidded clay pot, the lid sealed with more clay, and cooked it in burning fire embers, flavoured with wild oregano until the meat fell from the bone.

The **flanks** contain lots of good meat, and a good idea is to boil them in water (with or without vegetables or herbs) to make delicious soup stock. When removed from the stock and cooled, they can be sprinkled with salt and roast in a hot oven until crunchy and golden, and then eaten with mashed tatties, or even better, with haggis and mashed tatties. Good for a hungry farmer!

The **neck fillet** looks so tender that one can almost believe it is the real fillet. However, it is advisable not to try to cook these quickly, but to braise them, either whole, or cut into pieces, with vegetables, to make a most delicious stew

Don't forget the other (and most nutritious) things which make up your lamb. Namely the **liver, heart and kidneys**, which sometimes are available in the supermarket, outrageously overpriced! There are many excellent recipes for these – lamb's liver and bacon (yum yum), stuffed hearts, and kidneys with rice and red wine - to name just a few.

What a nice feeling you will have when you know that your freezer contains all the ingredients for family and party eating, of the highest quality and flavour, and at a fair price. Revel in it.

## A FEW RECIPE SUGGESTIONS

### THE LEG (OR GIGOT)

#### **SIMPLE ROAST LAMB** (Keith Floyd, A Feast of Floyd)

2 tablespoons salt  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary or  
1 teaspoon crushed dried rosemary  
2 oz (50 g) butter, melted  
4 ½ lb (2 kg) leg of young lamb

Mix the salt, pepper and rosemary with the butter and use this to coat the meat as evenly as possible all over. Place the lamb in a shallow roasting tin and sear in a preheated oven, 450F/230C (gas 8), for 20 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 350F/180C (gas 4) and roast for a further 40-60 minutes, or until the lamb is cooked to your taste.

#### **MINTED LEG OF LAMB** (Ranse Leembruggen, Easy Eastern Cooking)

5 lb (2.25 kg) leg of lamb  
3 oz (75 g) mint leaves  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
3 cloves garlic, crushed  
12 oz (350 g) onions, diced  
2 oz (50 g) green pepper, diced  
1 ½ teaspoon salt  
¼ pint (150 ml) honey  
Juice of 1 lemon  
4 oz butter

Remove as much fat as possible from the leg of lamb and make sure the skin has been pulled off. Cut deep incisions into the meat, right down to the bone, at regular intervals. Place in a deep baking tray. Put all other ingredients into a blender and liquidize. Cover the meat with the purée, making sure you work the liquid into the incisions. Cover with foil and bake in a preheated oven (200C/350F, gas 4) for a further 1 ½ hours, or until the lamb is cooked, basting at regular intervals. Carve into slices and serve with rice and salad.

### THE SHOULDER

#### **ROAST SHOULDER OF LAMB** (Janet Warren, a Feast of Scotland)

1 shoulder of lamb on the bone  
2 tablespoons dripping or oil  
1 clove garlic

Wipe joint then rub the surface with a cut clove of garlic and sprinkle with salt. Melt dripping or oil in a tin, add the joint and cook at 400F/200C (gas 6) for the first 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 350F/180C (gas 4) for the rest of cooking time (approx. 20 mins/lb), basting meat about twice. When cooked lift onto a dish and rest for 15 minutes (this makes it easier to carve). Serve with gravy (see below), and mint sauce or redcurrant jelly.

#### **WONDERFUL GRAVY FOR LAMB** (an old farmer's widow)

The juices left in roasting tin after meat removed  
1-2 tablespoons flour (depending on quantity of liquid)  
Water saved from cooking vegetables  
Salt and pepper

Drain off most of the fat from the meat juice, using a tablespoon. Add flour to pan, and stir over moderate heat until lumps removed and turning brown. Add vegetable water and stir constantly until gravy is smooth and slightly thickened. Continue to cook until bubbling and rich looking. Season with salt and pepper and serve poured over meat and/or vegetables.

#### **STUFFED SHOULDER OF LAMB** (Mary Norwak, The Farmouse Kitchen)

1 shoulder of lamb, boned  
2 onions, skinned and chopped  
2 oz butter  
Rosemary or parsley to taste

Stuff meat with onions and rosemary or parsley. Roll up and tie well with string. Put in tin, brush melted butter over joint. Roast at 350F/180C (gas 4) for twenty-five minutes per pound and twenty-five minutes over. Remove string, and serve in thick slices, with mashed potatoes and fresh vegetables.

## CHOPS

### **TO FRY AND GRILL LAMB CHOPS** (Marguerite Patten)

Choose loin chops

To fry: If chops are very lean, pour a little oil into pan and heat. Add chops and fry steadily rather than too quickly to give a good crispness to outside fat.

To grill: Have the grill hot to begin with. Brown meat on either side. Lower heat to moderate so that meat can cook through to centre. Serve chops with grilled or fried tomatoes, mushrooms, and a buttery baked potato.

### **LAMB CHOPS WITH SWISS CHEESE** (Beryl Downing, Quick Cook)

(Serves 4)

4 loin chops  
4 oz Emmenthal or Gruyere cheese  
1 clove garlic  
Salt and pepper  
½ oz butter

Slit each chop horizontally to the bone. Cut 4 small, thick slices of cheese, about 1 oz (25g) each and place in the slits like a sandwich filling. Fold the cheese, if necessary, to fit the pockets exactly. Heat the grill. Crush the garlic with salt and rub both sides of the chops. Dot with butter and cook under a medium grill for 5-8 minutes each side, depending on the thickness of the chops. Two minutes before the end of the cooking time, spread the chops with any cheese that has melted into the pan, return to the grill and cook until golden.

## LAMB FLANK (BREAST OF LAMB)

### **LANCASHIRE HOTPOT** (Marguerite Patten)

12 oz – 1 lb flank  
2 large onions  
1 lb potatoes  
Hot water or stock  
Salt and pepper  
1 oz butter or margarine  
Parsley

Cut meat into neat pieces, removing the rib bone if present Peel and slice potatoes and onions (about ¼ in. thick). Fill a casserole with alternate layers of meat, onions and potato, seasoning each layer and ending with a layer of potato. Half fill dish with water. Dot top with butter and put on lid (or foil). Bake in coolest part of oven for about 3 hours at 350F/180C (gas 4), lowering heat after two hours. Take lid off for last 20 minutes to brown top. Garnish with parsley.

## LAMB SHANKS

### **BRAISED LAMB SHANKS WITH BUTTER BEANS** (Christopher Trotter, Scottish Cookery)

4 lamb shanks  
2 tablesp. Olive oil  
1 large onion, peeled and diced  
1 large carrot, peeled and diced  
1 large leek, peeled and diced  
2 cloves garlic, crushed with salt  
12 oz (350g) butter beans, soaked overnight, or 1 large tin  
2 large tins chopped tomatoes  
1 tablesp. Tomato purée  
1 bay leaf

Peel and cut the onion, carrot and leek into ¼ in. dice. Heat oven to 450F/230C (gas 8). Season lamb shanks and smother them in the olive oil, roast in the hot oven for about 10 minutes until well coloured. Turn oven down to 375F/190C (gas 5) and continue to cook for about 2 hours. Half an hour before the end add the diced vegetables, stir them in to collect some of the juices. After the 2 hours, remove the lamb shanks and set them aside. Add the garlic to the pan and stir in, then add the drained butter beans, the tomatoes, plus 2 tins water, using one of the tomato tins, the tomato purée and bay leaf. Bring to the boil and then return the lamb to the pan, ensuring it is well covered by bean mixture. Cook for another 30 mins in the oven. The lamb should be falling off the bone and the beans soft.

### **KLEF'TIKO (ROBBERS' LAMB)** (Jane Grigson, Dishes from the Mediterranean)

8 lamb shanks  
1 lemon, quartered  
2 teasps (5 ml) each salt and dried oregano, mixed  
1 large onion, sliced thinly  
3 bay leaves (optional)  
¼ pint (150 ml) dry white wine or water  
8 oz (225g) plain flour  
Black pepper

Heat the oven to 150C (gas mark 2). Turn the flanks in the salt and oregano mixture. Place these, plus any remaining salt and oregano, into a casserole dish with a tight fitting lid. Add pepper, onion, bay leaves and the liquid. Cover dish with foil and press lid on tightly. Cook in the oven for 2-2 ½ hours. After about 45 minutes open oven door and listen. If liquid is bubbling energetically, lower temperature until it murmurs. When meat is done it should fall off the bone. Serve using the cooking liquid as a sauce. Noodles, macaroni and small deep-fried potatoes go well with Kleftiko.

Another good idea for **shanks**, recommended by one of our loyal local customers, is to stuff the shanks into a casserole dish, top with sliced red onions, lots of red wine, and cook for ever!

## THE OFFAL

### LIVER

#### **LIVER AND BACON**

A whole lamb's liver will feed four people if sliced fairly thinly (approx. ¼ in.).

1 lamb's liver (washed and patted dry)  
2 medium onions, chopped or sliced  
4 rashers bacon, cut into small pieces (smoked is best, but any will be fine)  
2 tablespoons good cooking oil (e.g. sunflower)  
2 tablespoons flour, seasoned with salt and pepper  
Scant ½ pint water

Slice the liver thinly, omitting the nasty white bits, and coat in the seasoned flour. Cook the onion in the oil until soft and beginning to brown. Remove and place in an oven proof dish. In the same oil (adding a bit more if necessary) fry the bacon pieces until cooked, then add the liver slices and brown quickly on both sides. Place the bacon and liver slices in the dish with the onion. Add the water and adjust seasoning if necessary. Cover with foil and cook in a moderate oven for about 40 minutes. Serve with boiled potatoes and a green vegetable.

#### **LIVER AND BACON RISOTTO** (contributed by Ann Redshaw, Craobh)

Ann says that this recipe has been a family favourite for 39 years, and is out of her head. The method of cooking is quite similar to the previous recipe, which just shows the inventiveness of thrifty home cooks! It serves 2 people.

6 oz lamb's liver, thinly sliced, skin removed  
4 rashers streaky bacon  
2 tomatoes  
1 onion, chopped  
Seasoned flour  
½ cup rice  
1 Oxo cube

Put rice on to cook. Chop onion into small pieces and begin cooking in a frying pan in a little oil and butter. Add chopped bacon. Wash and dry liver, cut into 1 in. pieces and dip in seasoned flour. Add to frying pan – with more butter/oil if needed. Cook for about 5 minutes on medium heat, turning. Skin tomatoes in boiling water and cut into four. Add to frying pan and cook gently for a few more minutes (until blood stops running out of liver). Do not overcook. Drain rice in a sieve and return to pan. Crumble in Oxo cube and fork through. Serve rice on plates topped with liver mixture, scraping everything out of the pan.

### KIDNEYS

#### **KIDNEY GUDGE-UP** (Elspeth Ritchie, Craignish)

In the early 60s, four of us – all in our twenties – crammed into a friend's tiny apartment in San Francisco, taking it in turns to sleep in the only bed, and on other nights kipping on the floor. We were all job hunting, broke, and hungry. One evening, starving as usual, we sent one of us to the butcher's on the next block, with a quarter to spend (25 cents). She came back with six lamb's kidneys, and with these we attempted to make a meal which would fill us up. The following recipe is the basic version, for I remember we all added things to the original pot when passing, such as vegetables, tomato ketchup (ugh), red wine (we always seemed to have some of that!), and other disgusting things to increase the amount. You can do the same!

2 lamb's kidneys per person  
Some streaky bacon  
Onion (as much as you feel like)  
Rice (about ½ cup per person)  
A little flour to coat the kidneys and bacon  
Some oil or dripping

Skin and cut each kidney into four, removing the plumbing – i.e. the white core. Cut the bacon into pieces, and coat all generously with flour. Chop the onion and fry in oil or dripping in a large deep frying pan until tender and beginning to colour. Next throw in the kidneys and bacon and stir into the onion. Leave on moderate heat to cook through. Meanwhile, cook the rice in boiling salted water until just tender. Drain. When kidneys are cooked, add water or red wine, salt and pepper, (and whatever other seasoning or vegetables grab your fancy), and bubble until a nice thick gravy has appeared. Then throw in the cooked rice and stir until all is heated through and you achieve a satisfactory gudge-up. Eat like a ravening wolf.

### HEARTS

#### **BRAISED STUFFED LAMB'S HEARTS** (Contributed by Sarah Bowden-Smith, Braevallich Farm, Dalmally)

4 lamb's hearts  
4 rashers streaky bacon, snipped  
4oz (100g) mushrooms, chopped  
1oz butter  
1 onion, chopped  
1 tsp flour  
1/8 pint (75ml) wine or stock  
14oz (397g) can chopped tomatoes  
Fresh parley, chopped

Wash hearts in cold water and remove plumbing (white tubes & centre channel) to make room for stuffing. Brown hearts with a little fat in a hot pan and remove. Add bacon and mushrooms to pan, toss for 5 mins & season. Divide mixture between the hearts and stuff well into the cavity. It won't fill each heart to the brim.

Make sauce by adding butter to pan and frying onions until beginning to brown. Sprinkle in flour. Add wine or stock and stir until thickened. Add tomatoes and season well. Pour into a deep casserole dish and place hearts on top, open side up. Cover and cook in a very high oven for 15 mins or slow roast in a low oven for 4-5 hours. Garnish with parsley before serving.

#### **SOME GENERAL TIPS**

- When roasting a joint, always let it rest outside the oven for 10 – 15 minutes before serving (i.e. when dishing up or making gravy). This allows the moisture in the meat to permeate all through, and makes for easier carving.
- Everyone's oven, though telling the same temperature, is slightly different, so if you think the juices in the tin are drying up, or browning and sticking, before the meat is cooked as you like it, either add a little water to the pan, or turn the heat down a bit more and cover with foil.
- Don't be nervous. Lamb is a very accommodating meat, and is equally good served slightly pink in the middle, or well cooked and crunchy on the outside.
- As a general rule, a leg or shoulder will serve 4-6 people (unless you are terribly greedy), chops at two per person, and the cheaper cuts as many as you like, because you can add more vegetables/beans/tatties to the pot as required.

For more recipes and/or tips, ring 01852 500243 or 500271. If you have any favourite lamb recipes you would like to share, please let us have them