

# The Hairy Bikers' Best of British



## Triple Crown Roast of Lamb with a Jewelled Fruit Stuffing and Minted Red Wine Sauce



Ask your butcher to cut through the bottom of each rib where it meets the spine to separate the chops at the base. Your butcher can also trim the meat away from the top of the ribs or even French trim it if you are looking for a very neat finish.

Serves 8

- ◆ 3 x racks best end of lamb (containing 7 chops each)

### For the fruity stuffing

- ◆ 3 tbsp olive oil
- ◆ 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- ◆ 50g flaked almonds
- ◆ 1 firm but ripe pear or eating apple
- ◆ 1 tsp ground cumin
- ◆ 1 tsp ground coriander
- ◆ ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ◆ ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ◆ 150g dried no-soak apricots, quartered
- ◆ 75g dried sweetened cranberries
- ◆ 75g sultanas
- ◆ finely grated zest 1 well scrubbed orange
- ◆ finely grated zest 1 unwaxed lemon
- ◆ 15g bunch fresh parsley, leaves finely chopped
- ◆ 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
- ◆ flaked sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Minted red wine sauce

- ◆ 2 tsp plain flour
- ◆ 150ml red wine
- ◆ 150ml good lamb stock or water
- ◆ 2 tsp red currant jelly
- ◆ 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh mint leaves or ½ tsp mint sauce

### FOOD FACTS



- ◆ Although suckling lamb was once popular in Britain at Christmas markets, lamb is now consumed after it has been weaned, so between four and 12 months. Once lamb is a year old it becomes a “hoggett”, and then mutton, which is at its best at around three to five years.
- ◆ Salt marsh lamb is much prized in Britain and France for its flavour. British salt marsh lamb is raised on the salt meadows of Romney Marsh in Kent, Ronaldsay in the Orkney Islands and Wales.

Historical facts provided by Monica Askay, Cook and Food Historian



- ① Preheat the oven to 220C/fan oven 200C/Gas 6.  
To make the stuffing, heat the oil in a large, non-stick frying pan. Add the onion and fry gently for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally until softened. Stir in the almonds and cook for 1-2 minutes until lightly toasted, stirring often.
- ② While the onion is cooking, peel the pear or apple and cut into eighths. Remove the cores and cut the fruit into roughly 1 cm slices working from the narrow end of each piece of apple or pear.
- ③ Sprinkle the spices over the onion and almonds and cook for 1 minute, stirring. Scatter the pear or apple pieces into the pan and add the garlic, apricots, sultanas, cranberries, orange and lemon zest. Stir together over a medium heat for a minute or two. Add all the herbs and season well with salt and pepper. Cook for 1 minute more, stirring. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.
- ④ To prepare the lamb, first strip off any skin and hard fat from the outside of each rack. You will probably need to use a sharp knife to work between the skin and fat and the meat. The outer part of the lamb will end up on the inside of the roast so it is important to get rid of any bits and bobs that will spoil the texture or flavour. Keep hold of the meatier pieces as they will be needed to make the gravy – around 200g should do it.
- ⑤ Next, cut through the slightly meaty membrane between the ribs almost all the way to the eye of the meat at the bottom. Scrape and trim the first 2-3 cm of each rib to show a clean bone. (How much you want to do this depends on you. If you have some of those little paper hats, the appearance is less important.) Season on both sides with salt and pepper.
- ⑥ Stand the ribs up on a large, sturdy roasting tin with the eye of the meat at the bottom. Using six long pieces of kitchen string, tie the ribs together at three points. We tie one piece over the top part of the rib and the other around the base where the bone has been sawn. If done correctly, you should end up with a circle of ribs and a small gap in the middle. The boniest part should touch the tin. Place the pile of meaty trimmings in the tin to cook along side the crown.
- ⑦ Spoon the stuffing into the centre of the ribs and cover the surface with a piece of foil. Cover the ends of all the bones with foil too so they do not burn in the oven. Set aside until 1 hour before serving. If leaving longer than 30 minutes, cover with cling film and pop into the fridge. You can prepare up to a day ahead if you like. If you have chilled the meat, don't forget to return to room temperature for about an hour before cooking.
- ⑧ Preheat the oven to 200C/fan oven 180C/Gas 6.  
Roast the crown for 45 minutes for pink meat and an extra 15 minutes if you prefer your lamb medium. Take off the foil protection 5 minutes before the end of the cooking time.
- ⑨ Remove the tin from the oven and carefully transfer the lamb to a serving platter. Cover with clean foil and a couple of tea towels. Leave to stand for 10-15 minutes. Holding one corner of the roasting tin with a folded dry tea towel, tip and drain off any excess fat, leaving just 1-2 tsp. Place the tin on the hob, lift off the meaty trimmings with a spatula and discard.
- ⑩ Sprinkle the flour into the tin and cook for a few seconds, stirring. Slowly pour the red wine into the tin and allow to bubble for 20 seconds or so while you stir vigorously with a wooden spoon to lift up any tasty juices and sticky sediment from the bottom. Stir in the water, add the mint and return to a simmer. Cook for 2-3 minutes until slightly thickened. Strain through a sieve into a heatproof jug.
- ⑪ Take the lamb to the table and cut through the bones to serve. Depending on the size of your racks, 2-3 chops should make one serving when accompanied by the fruity stuffing. Spoon over a little of the sauce and serve.

## FOOD FACTS



- ◆ As a fatty meat, lamb is complemented by acidic sauces and stuffings. The preferred British sauce for lamb is mint sauce which has its roots in the green sauces dating from medieval times. Salsa verde also comes from the same roots.
- ◆ The combination of meat with aromatic spices and fresh and dried fruit is influenced by North African and Persian cuisine. It's a combination which also echoes our medieval tastes.

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Cook and Food Historian

