

Minted Lamb Shanks



Serves: 4 | Prep: 15 min | Cook: 4 hr | Source: #ParlezPantry

Lamb shanks are delicious, they originate from the lower rear legs. The same joint in pork is the 'hock' and in beef, the 'leg'. The equivalent joint on the front legs are 'fore shank' for lamb, 'knuckle' for pork and 'shin' for beef.

There is a lot of connective tissue within the shank which when cooked slowly melts throughout, therefore avoiding being tough and chewy. This adds to the tenderness of the meat allowing it to simply fall off the bone. Ordinarily these tougher cuts of meat do most of the work for the animal.

The key component of connective tissue is collagen which forms a rich liquid (gelatin) when broken down. To do this in the most effective manner we cook low and slow.

Ingredients

- 4 lamb shanks
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp salt and pepper
- 2 medium (finely chopped red onions)
- 2 cloves diced garlic
- 1 cup red wine (optional)
- Up to 1 litre beef stock
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce (use Henderson's if you wish to leave out any anchovies)
- 2 tbsp chunky apricot jam
- 2 large handfuls of mint leaves (roughly chopped)
- 1 tbsp Exmoor beast ale chutney (other brands are available)
- Pea shoot salad (to garnish)

Notes

This is so simple, here I've braised the shanks and served with a light and fluffy (3 eggs) mashed potato, the sauce that the shanks were cooked in, and simply garnished with a pea shoot salad.



Method

1. Preheat your oven to 160c.
2. Heat a Dutch oven (or similar) to a moderately high heat on the hob and add 1 tbsp of olive oil.
3. Season the lamb with salt and pepper and brown on all sides, turning frequently. Don't forget to brown the thick end of the shank also. Set the lamb aside whilst you progress to the next stage.
4. Lower the heat and add the second tbsp of olive oil to the pot, followed by the onions and garlic, stirring for about 12 to 15 minutes until fragrant, whilst adding the cup of wine (or a cup of stock) after 5 minutes. The onions and garlic will become a thick and rugged sauce.
5. Add the beef stock, Worcestershire sauce, the apricot jam, ale chutney and half the chopped mint and bring to a gentle simmer then remove from the heat.
6. Add the lamb back to the pot and place the lid on, and transfer the pot to the preheated oven.
7. Leave covered in the oven for 3.5 to 4hrs or until the meat is incredibly tender and easily pulled from the bone.
8. Finely chop the remaining mint leaves and add 1 tbsp olive oil in a pestle and mortar, pounding for 2 to 3 minutes to make the mint oil.
9. Finally, remove the lamb and blend the sauce with a stick blender until it thickens and becomes silky, add the lamb back to the pot, replace the lid and wait 5 minutes before serving.