

What's Cookin': Lamb gets a bad rap— but choose wisely and it's tasty

Over the next few months, we have a couple of lamb recipes for you. We've never done much with lamb in the past and I think lamb gets a bad rap. Lots of people tell me that they don't eat it because its too strong tasting or too gamey tasting— but what lamb were you eating?

There's lamb and then there's lamb. The best lamb is milk-fed, meaning that its less than six months old. Generally, a lot of the lamb we see is six months to a year old. This could be grass fed or grain fed lamb. Yearling meat is from an animal that is 1-2 years old and mutton is from an animal older than two years. Lamb should be pink with white fat.



Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner

If the meat is red and the fat is yellow, the animal is older and the meat is much stronger tasting.

Also, once upon a time, "spring lamb," meant young lamb brought to market in spring. Today, if you see a package that says "spring lamb" it has nothing to do with the age of the animal.

I'm sure many of you have heard of "frenching" lamb— but do you know what it means? Lamb fat has a very

strong flavour, and a rack of lamb (the entire 7-8 rib section on one side of the animal) is often extensively trimmed before roasting. Frenching involves scraping the rib ends clean of every iota of fat and meat. To many butchers, it also means removing the deckle (the thin layer of meat sandwiched between layers of fat on top of the eye of the rack) so that just the eye of the meat remains. This extra step can come as a shock to customers who like that yummy piece, so it pays to inquire. Frenching a rack of lamb is just as time-consuming and laborious as it sounds, so you might want to leave it in the hands of a good butcher. This trimming tech-

nique is the primary reason why rack of lamb carries with it such a refined, elegant con-

notation. Expensive yes, but worth it!
Have fun and keep cooking!

Lamb Chops with Balsamic Fig Glaze

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 racks fresh lamb
- salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup fig compote
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Method

1. Preheat BBQ to medium-high heat, or oven to 400 degrees F.



2. Cut lamb chops into portions with 2 bones per portion. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Place on a baking sheet

in the oven or directly on the grill. Cook until internal temperature is 140 degrees F for rare, 150 degrees F. for medium.

4. Meanwhile in a small saucepan, combine fig compote and balsamic vinegar. Heat until hot and smooth.

5. When lamb is done, serve with a drizzle of the balsamic fig glaze otop.

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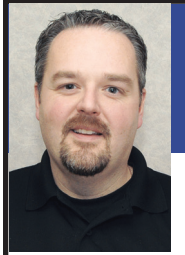
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