

Slow braised lamb shanks with mint gremolata



This recipe takes time - but most of it is spent letting the lamb slowly cook away in a low oven, filling your home with amazing aromas. There are also a few ingredients, but they all add to the flavour and result in the most mind-blowing lamb shanks you will ever taste - guaranteed.

Ingredients [serves 4]

For the fondant potatoes

- 4 maris piper potatoes, peeled
- 250ml chicken stock
- 45g butter
- 4 sprigs thyme

For the braised lamb

- 4 lamb shanks
- 5 tbsp plain flour
- 120g bacon lardons
- 1 stick celery, 1 carrot, 1 leek & 1 red onion, all roughly chopped
- 4 tbsp tomato puree
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 2 tsp white peppercorns
- 2 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 250ml red wine
- 200ml dry white wine
- 45ml balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp redcurrant jelly
- 150ml demi-glace
- 300ml chicken stock

For the kale

- 1 large bunch curly kale
- 1 clove garlic, finely sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil

For the gremolata

- 2 tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped
- Peel of 1 lemon, finely grated
- 1/2 garlic clove, minced

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C.
2. Cut 4 potato cylinders with a 5cm cutter, trim so they're flat and remove the sharp edges to leave what looks like a hockey puck. Season and fry one side in olive oil until golden. Flip, reduce the heat and add the butter and thyme to the pan, cooking for 5mins more. Pour in the stock until half way up the potatoes, bring to a simmer and put in the preheated oven for 30 minutes to cook through. Transfer to a lined baking tray, whilst you prepare the lamb.
3. Reduce the oven to 150C.
4. French trim the shanks by removing 2cm of flesh from the "thin" end to expose the bone. Season with salt & pepper and lightly dust with the flour.
5. Heat a little oil in a casserole dish and fry the bacon over a medium-high heat. Remove to one side.
6. Brown the shanks in the bacon fat, then put to one side whilst you cook the vegetables. You will need to do this in batches.
7. Add the chopped vegetables and cook until soft and starting to caramelise, about 10mins. Then add the tomato puree and fry for a further minute.
8. Finally, add the remaining ingredients and bring to the boil.
9. Reduce to a simmer and transfer the reserved meat back to the casserole. Cover and braise in the preheated oven for 1hr.
10. Remove the lid and cook for a further 3hrs, turning regularly until the meat is fall-off-the-bone tender.
11. 2hrs before serving make the gremolata. Finely chop all of the ingredients, mix and cover to allow the flavours to infuse.
12. Carefully remove the shanks from the braising liquid and put the potatoes into the hot oven to warm through.
13. Strain the sauce to remove the vegetables and reduce over a high heat, until you have a rich gravy.
14. Heat some olive oil in a large pan with the sliced garlic. Add the kale and stir to distribute the heat. Season and cook until wilted but still crunchy, 2-3mins.
15. Serve each shank with a little sauce, a fondant potato, some wilted kale and a spoonful of mint gremolata.