

For Your Information

- Lamb has been produced for 10,000 years, beginning in Central Asia. In the Middle Ages, sheep was the most productive crop. It provided meat and wool; the skin was used for parchment, and milk was used for butter and cheese. The Spanish explorer Cortez introduced lamb to North America in 1519.
- American lamb has a milder, more delicate flavor than foreign lamb. It is preferred for its larger cuts and higher meat-to-bone ratio.
- American lamb is available year-round, thanks to the 75,000 lamb producers in the United States.
- American lamb is suited to a variety of cuisines: traditional American dishes, as well as diverse ethnic styles such as Mediterranean and Caribbean cooking. It accommodates the current trend toward lighter, leaner, and healthier foods.
- Whereas racks and loin chops are usually expensive, the price of many other lamb cuts is quite reasonable.
- Fresh lamb may remain in its original wrap if used within 1 to 2 days and stored in the coldest area of refrigerator (32°F to 40°F). If kept more than 2 days, remove the wrap and store in loosely wrapped wax paper. If not used through the fourth day, it is best to freeze the product.
- Unfrozen ground lamb should not be kept more than 24 hours. It doesn't keep the same as solid pieces.

General Tips on Meat Thermometers and Cooking Temperatures

Nothing is more valuable in cooking than a good meat thermometer. The temperature you use when preparing lamb is as important as being wide awake when you drive down the road. Another cardinal rule is do not let the thermometer rest against the bone. Also remember that the temperature of cooked meat elevates 5 to 10 degrees after it leaves the heat source.





















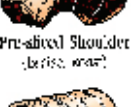









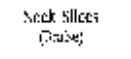
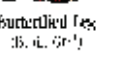
Most often lamb is cooked at 300°F to 325°F. Lamb is best when served rare to medium; overcooking it diminishes the flavor and texture. To get rare, medium, and well-done lamb, the internal temperature readings should be as follows:

140°F	160°F	170°F - 180°F
Rare	Medium	Well done

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The cooked meat should rest in a warm place for 15 minutes. During that time, the internal cooking continues. Remove the lamb from the oven soon enough to allow the temperature to reach the desired reading. This also makes slicing easier.

Lamb Cuts and How to Cook Them

	WHOLESALE						
	SHANK	BREAST	SHOULDER	RACK	LOIN	SIRLOIN	LEG
RETAIL	 Shanks (Fresh)	 Riblets (Fresh, Grill)	 Saddle Cut Shoulder (Roast)	 Back Breast (Roast)	 Loin Chop (Broil, Grill)	 Sirloin Roast (Roast)	 Whole Leg (Roast)
	 Stew Meat (Simmer to Cook)	 Lamb Patties (Broil, Grill)	 Arm Chop (Broil, Grill)	 Rib Chops (Broil, Grill)	 Loin Roast (Roast)	 Sirloin Steaks (Broil, Grill)	 Round Leg Steak (Broil, Grill, Grill)
	 Tender Ribs (Broil, Grill, Broast)		 Shoulder Blade Chop (Broil, Grill)	 French Rib Chops (Broil, Grill)	 Double Loin Chop (Broil, Grill)	 Sirloin Steaks (Broil, Grill)	 Boneless Leg (Roast, Broast, Sp., Broast)
			 Pre-sliced Shoulder (Broast, Roast)	 Rack for One (Roast)	 Medallion (Broil)	 Cubes for Shish Kabob (Broil, Grill)	 Six French Style Leg (Broast)
			 Boneless Rolled Shoulder (Roast, Broast)	 Double French Back (Roast)	 Boneless Loin (Roast)	 Boneless Sirloin (Broast, Grill, Grill)	 Shank Half (Roast)
			 Neck Slices (Broast)				 Butterflied Leg (Broil, Grill)

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Nutritional Information

A 3-ounce serving of cooked, lean lamb provides adults with 3% of the recommended daily allowance of protein and 74% of vitamin B12. Lamb is also high in niacin, zinc, and iron.

Listed below is further nutritional information about several popular cuts of lamb according to their method of cooking.

Three Ounces Cooked, Lean Lamb	Calories	Protein (g)	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)
Foreshank, braised	159	26	5	2	89
Leg, sirloin half, roasted	173	24	8	3	78
Loin chop, broiled	183	25	8	3	80
Leg and shoulder cubes for stew, braised	190	29	7	3	92
Leg and shoulder cubes for kabobs, broiled	158	24	6	2	77
Ground, broiled	240	21	17	7	82

Cooking Techniques

ROASTING

Place the meat fat side up in an open pan. Put a rack or broiler pan underneath to catch the drippings. Add a little water to the bottom of the pan. Trim the fat. Lamb has very little marbling, making its fat content only about 7%, which can be removed. To get a flavorful juice base similar to bouillon, cook the lamb, spoon off the drippings, and then cool the drippings. Once cooled, the fat released in cooking is easily removed. You can extend the juice base with nonfat chicken broth or beef broth. A lemon-lime soda is good for reheating casseroles or perking up a lamb salad.

Cookbooks differ on whether to salt the meat before cooking. Many different seasonings other than salt are available. Fresh lime juice, for instance, creates a savory flavor.

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Recommended Temperatures for Roasting Lamb			
Lamb Cut	Weight (lb)	Internal Temp. (°F)	Approx. Cooking Time (min/lb)
Leg (bone in)	5-9	140 160 180	20-25 20-30 30-35
Leg (boneless)	4-7	140 160 180	25-30 30-35 35-40
Rib Roast or Crown	2½-4	140 160 170-180	25-30 30-35 35-40
Square Cut Shoulder	4-6	160 170-180	25-30 30-35
Boneless Shoulder	3½-5	160 170-180	35-40 40-45
Cushion Shoulder	3½-5	170-180	30-35

BROILING

If your broiler has different temperature settings, always use a moderate temperature.

Set oven to broil. Place meat 2 to 5 inches from heat depending on its thickness. The thinner chops should be closest to the heat. Use tongs to turn the meat. Do not pierce the meat; it causes juice loss. Season the cooked side and turn. You can combine cooking methods: start on the grill and finish on the broiler or vice versa. When cooking patties, season 1 or 2 hours ahead or overnight.

Cooking Lamb

Recommended Temperatures for Broiling Lamb		
Lamb Cut	Thickness (inches)	Approx. Cooking Time (min)
Shoulder Chop	¾-1	10-12
Rib Chop	1	12
	1½	18
	2	22
Loin Chop	1	12
	1½	18
	2	22
Sirloin Steaks	¾-1	12-14
Leg Steaks	¾-1	14-18
Cubes for Kebabs	1-2	12-22
Lamb Patties	1-3	18

BRAISING

This is the moist method for cooking both small and large cuts of lamb that are less tender. Use a heavy nonstick fry pan and cover the meat with a lid. If the recipe calls for oil, olive oil is recommended for its desirable flavor and better heat point. Use a small amount of liquid, such as water, vegetable juice, soup, lime juice, or sweet white wine. Cook on low until done. Simmer; do not boil. The steam created from the liquids and low temperature provides the moisture. Lamb is naturally tender, so cooking time is shorter than with other meats. Pour off the juices and then season. You can make a sauce or gravy.

COOKING FROZEN LAMB

Lamb does not have to be defrosted before cooking. Frozen legs, loin, or shoulder roasts should be cooked at 325°F to 350°F. Braise frozen thick chops about the same time as defrosted cuts. Place frozen patties and chops farther from the heat to keep them from overbrowning before the meat has an opportunity to cook inside. Cooking time varies; use your best judgment.

OTHER TECHNIQUES

Lamb is adaptable to the Crockpot, grill, or rotisserie, inside or outside. Lamb can be microwaved as well. You may want to use a commercial browning liquid such as Kitchen Bouquet with water. You can season afterwards as well. Use a probe that can go into the microwave. Do not rest the probe against the bone. The lamb should be wrapped in plastic wrap to retain moisture. Remember, as with other methods of cooking, rest time is required afterward to equalize the temperature.

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Seasoning

To enhance flavor, low-sodium teriyaki sauce can be used instead of soy sauce. Freshly ground pepper is always used in lamb dishes as well. Get this!

Do not be afraid to adjust seasonings to your liking, but try it the first time. Seasonings in lamb, yearling, or mutton should enhance the dish, not overpower it. You should find the seasoning pleasing, not overdone.

The following herbs and spices enhance the flavor of lamb:

Herbs

Basil

Bay leaf

Caraway

Cilantro

Coriander

Marjoram

Mint

Mustard

Oregano

Paprika

Parsley

Rosemary

Thyme

Spices

Allspice

Cinnamon

Cloves

Curry powder

Garlic

Ginger

Lemon pepper

Consider the possibilities. Try lamb; you'll really like it!

Selected Recipes

Recipes make lamb a year-round selection for your table.

Appetizers

LAMB QUESADILLA WITH APPLE MINT SALSA

1 pound ground lamb

½ cup diced onion

½ cup peeled fresh apple, diced

2 cups grated Jack cheese

1 teaspoon salt

8 flour tortillas

1 teaspoon ground pepper

¼ teaspoon sage

8 ounces cream cheese

Cooking Lamb

1. In large frying pan sauté lamb, onion, apple, sage, salt and black pepper until lamb is cooked. Pour off fat.
2. Distribute mixture on four flour tortillas and add ¼ cup grated cheese and ¼ cup lamb mix. Dot with 3 to 4 tablespoons of cream cheese.
3. Cover each tortilla with one of the remaining flour tortillas. Grill until cheese melts.
4. Cut each grilled tortilla. Serve with apple mint salsa. Serves 8.

Apple-Mint Salsa

2 cups fresh apple, diced
1 cup red onion, diced
1 tablespoon fresh jalapeño pepper, finely diced
½ cup apple mint jelly
¼ cup red bell pepper, diced

Thoroughly mix all the above ingredients.

LAMB AND CHEESE CANAPE SPREAD

1 pound ground lamb	1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon chili sauce	8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon Beau Monde*	1 teaspoon dill weed
1/8 teaspoon fresh ground pepper	1 teaspoon onion powder or 2 tablespoons minced onion

1. Combine lamb and garlic. Cook over low heat until lamb is browned, stirring occasionally. Pour off fat.
2. Combine lamb/garlic mixture with the remaining ingredients; mix well. Chill. Serve as a spread for bread or crackers. Pepper crackers are especially good with this dish. Rye bread is good too.

*Note: Beau Monde powder is made by Spice Island Company. It is an especially good combination of celery and onion salt.

LAMB-STUFFED MUSHROOMS

1 pound lean ground lamb	16 large mushrooms, washed and dried
juice of 1 lemon	2 tablespoons minced onion
½ cup melted butter	½ teaspoon salt; dash of ground pepper
2 tablespoons parsley	¾ cup fine bread crumbs
½ cup grated Swiss or Parmesan cheese	½ cup white wine (preferably sweet)

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1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Rinse and dry mushrooms; then remove stems. Dip caps in ½ cup melted butter. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Finely chop stems and set aside.
3. In a skillet, slowly sauté lamb, chopped mushroom stems, parsley, and onion in the remaining ¼ cup butter until meat is pinkish gray.
4. In a bowl, combine grated cheese, salt, pepper, ½ cup bread crumbs, and wine. Add the lamb mixture and toss lightly. Sprinkle lightly with remaining bread crumbs. Dot with additional butter.
5. Bake in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes. Serve piping hot.

LAMB PINWHEELS

1 pound ground lamb	1/2 teaspoon rosemary
1 loaf brown sandwich-size bread, fresh	1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/2 teaspoon Beau Monde	Miracle Whip, fat free or regular
1 tablespoon creamed horseradish	

1. Brown the lamb at low heat. Pour off fat as you cook. Do not overcook. Add all seasonings, except for Miracle Whip.
2. Use an electric knife to trim the crust from the bread. Save the crusts for another recipe, such as the meatball recipe below. Flatten the bread one slice at a time with a rolling pin or a drinking glass.
3. Spread the desired amount of Miracle Whip on each slice of bread, and then spoon warm meat onto the slices. Roll and secure with toothpicks.
4. Place the rolls seam side down on a baking sheet. Brush lightly with melted butter. Place three toothpicks in the rolls and cut between the toothpicks with a very sharp knife or an electric knife to make party-size bites. Rolls may be served whole and held together with two toothpicks.

PARTY MEATBALLS

2 pounds ground lamb	freshly ground pepper
1 package dry Lipton Onion Soup mix	1 ¼ teaspoons Beau Monde
1 tablespoon dill weed	1 tablespoon chili seasoning*
1 egg	

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Thoroughly mix all of the above ingredients. Use at least 6 to 7 grinds of the pepper mill.

*You may substitute taco seasoning or Old Bay seasoning for the chili seasoning.

3. Shape into half-dollar- or nickel-size meatballs.
4. Place meatballs in a shallow broiler pan and cover with sauce. (See recipe below.) You can extend the recipe with an extra pound of lamb and bread crumbs.
5. Bake for 45 minutes. Baste once or twice with the sauce.

Sauce

1 28-ounce bottle of hickory barbecue sauce (Kraft brand is recommended.)
1 quart V8 juice
1 can light beer, warm
1 cup sugar

Combine all of the above ingredients. To enhance the flavor of the meatballs, mix the sauce and meatballs the night before. Store in the refrigerator until ready to cook.

Main Courses

INDIAN CURRIED LAMB CUBES WITH SAFFRON

2 pounds lean lamb shank	1/8 teaspoon saffron powder
2 large garlic cloves	1 cup warm water
1/4 teaspoon ginger powder	1 1/2 teaspoons coriander powder
1/2 teaspoon cumin powder	1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper	3 tablespoons lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground cinnamon	1 lemon, sliced
6 tablespoons peanut or vegetable oil	1/4 teaspoon chili powder
	2 cups finely sliced onions

1. Cut lamb into 1-inch cubes and place in a large bowl. Rub garlic cloves thoroughly into the lamb. Rub in the ginger powder, cumin powder, chili powder, and black pepper. Stir cinnamon powder into the oil and pour over the meat. Add saffron powder, stir, and marinate for 1 hour. At the end of the hour, stir again thoroughly and marinate for 2 more hours.
2. Pour the lamb and any liquid into a 4-quart, heavy-bottomed pot. Add the warm water and bring to a boil. Then lower the heat to medium, cover, and cook until the lamb is tender, about 20 to 35 minutes.

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3. Remove lamb with a slotted spoon and reduce the heat to low. Add onions and coriander powder; simmer until onions are soft and the liquid is slightly thickened.
4. Put the lamb back into the pot, a few pieces at a time. Sprinkle the parsley over the meat and bring to a boil again. Reduce heat, cover, and cook 15 minutes over low heat. Stir in lemon juice and simmer 1 minute before serving.
5. Serve hot, garnished with lemon slices. Serves 6.

MIDDLE EASTERN GRILLED LAMB KABOBS WITH CUMIN AND CINNAMON

3½ pounds sirloin half leg of lamb	¼ cup olive oil
1 teaspoon ground cumin	1 teaspoon ground black pepper
¾ teaspoon salt	½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
cherry tomatoes	mushrooms
small whole onions	zucchini
6 12-inch metal skewers	

1. Remove the bone from the leg of lamb, trim the fat, and cut into 1½-inch cubes.
2. Whisk oil, cumin, pepper, salt, and cinnamon in a 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. Add lamb to the dish and toss to coat well with oil mixture. Let marinate at room temperature for 1 hour or refrigerate 1½ to 4 hours, tossing occasionally.
3. Prepare barbecue at medium heat or preheat broiler. Thread lamb pieces onto skewers, adding vegetables between the cubes of meat. (The types and amounts of vegetables used can be varied.) Grill or broil lamb, turning occasionally, about 6 minutes for medium rare. Serves 6.

BAKED IRISH LAMB STEW

3 to 4 pounds boneless, trim lamb shoulder	12 medium-sized red-skinned potatoes
4 large onions, peeled and quartered	½ pound lean thickly sliced bacon, diced
1 teaspoon or more crumbled thyme	2-3 tablespoons minced parsley
1 bay leaf	salt to taste and freshly ground pepper
3 cups lamb stock (See recipe below.) or vegetable or chicken broth	

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Peel the potatoes. Slice half of them very thinly and layer on the bottom of a large Dutch oven or casserole.

Cooking Lamb

3. Slice the onions ½ inch thick and layer half of the onions on top of the potatoes.
4. Cut lamb shoulder into 1-inch cubes. Arrange lamb and bacon over the onions and season generously with thyme, parsley, salt and pepper. Cover with the remaining sliced onions.
5. Arrange the remaining potatoes, left whole, over the onions and pour in the lamb stock or vegetable or chicken broth. Sprinkle the top with more salt and pepper and tuck the bay leaf into the casserole.
6. Cover with a tight-fitting lid or aluminum foil and place in oven for about 2½ hours or until the meat is tender and the bottom potatoes have cooked down into a sauce.
7. Stew is best when made the day before it is served. Refrigerate overnight, skim off any fat from the casserole, and reheat at 350°F. Remove the bay leaf before serving. Serves 6 to 8.

Lamb Stock

3 pounds meaty lamb bones (shank or leg bones are best)
1 bay leaf
3 or 4 celery stalks
1 large whole onion, peeled
salt to taste

3 or 4 whole garlic cloves, peeled
10-12 peppercorns
1 small bunch of parsley
1 large carrot, scraped

1. Place bones in a large stockpot. Cover with water and slowly bring to a boil, skimming the surface constantly until no more foam comes to the top.
2. Unless you prefer to strain the stock when it is done, tie the garlic, bay leaf, peppercorns, celery, and parsley together in a cheesecloth bag tied with kitchen twine and add to the pot.
3. Add the onion and carrot to the boiling broth. Cover and simmer for at least 2 to 3 hours.
4. Remove the cheesecloth bag and its contents along with the carrot and onion. Transfer the bones to a platter, and when they are cooled, strip off the meat, remove the marrow, and set aside. Discard the bones. Skim the fat off the top of the stock. Salt to taste. Yields 3 to 4 quarts.

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RUSSIAN BRAISED LAMB SHANKS WITH VEGETABLES

6 meaty lamb shanks	3 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped	3 garlic cloves, chopped
salt and pepper to taste	½ cup meat stock/broth or red wine
4 large potatoes, cut in 2-inch chunks	3 firm medium-sized tomatoes
1 large eggplant	2 large onions, thinly sliced
¾ pound fresh string beans	

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Brown the lamb shanks in hot oil in a very large Dutch oven. When they are deeply colored on all sides, add the chopped onion, garlic, salt, and pepper and stir with a wooden spoon until the onions are limp and brown.
3. Pour meat stock/broth over the lamb shanks, cover tightly, and place in the oven for 1 ½ hours.
4. Peel, seed, and cut the tomatoes in half. Wash and stem the eggplant; cut into 1-inch cubes. Clean green beans and remove the strings.
5. After the lamb has cooked for 1 ½ hours, add the vegetables to the casserole and enough stock/wine to keep everything moist. Salt and pepper the vegetables lightly and baste with the pan juices. Return to the oven and continue to cook for another 1 ½ hours, or until the lamb and vegetables are very tender. Serve hot. Serves 6.

CRÈME DE MENTHE RACK OF LAMB

4-5 pounds lamb roast	freshly ground pepper, 8-10 grinds
½ cup Crème de Menthe	1 clove garlic, minced
large mushrooms, stems removed	1 teaspoon salt

1. Preheat the oven to 275°F.
2. Trim rib bones to make a circle with two racks. Tie the rib bones with cooking string.
3. Rub garlic over the meat, followed by salt and pepper.
4. Cover the bones above the meat with aluminum foil.
5. Cook for 4 hours. Baste with the Crème de Menthe every 20 minutes. After each application of the Crème de Menthe, cover the meat with a foil tent.

6. When the lamb is cooked, cap each bone with a large mushrooms. Note: You may also use cherry tomatoes or large green or black olives.

You may want to use your own favorite dressing in the racks to complement the meat. A traditional Thanksgiving dressing is very good. But you may want to try another possibility:

Apple Dressing

6 bacon slices	1/3 cup brown sugar
1 cup celery, chopped	4 cups apples, pared and chopped
1 cup onions, chopped	1 cup raisins
2 tablespoons Hendrickson's dressing*	stale bread crumbs

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Fry or microwave the bacon until crisp and then drain. Set the bacon aside. Use some of the drippings to sauté the onions and celery slowly for 9 to 10 minutes. Do not burn. (Save some of the drippings for cooking the apples.)
3. Place the onions and celery in a bowl and set aside.
4. Add apples, sugar, Hendrickson's dressing, and raisins to the drippings in the bowl. (Dried cranberries or a mixture of raisins and cranberries may be used.) Crumble the bacon and add to the bowl. Mix well and then place the apple mixture in a skillet.

*Note: Hendrickson's dressing is found with other salad dressings. If it is unavailable, you may substitute sweet rice wine vinegar.

5. Cook on low until the apples are cooked but not mushy. Add the onions and celery.
6. Mix in the stale bread crumbs. (Add bread crumbs as needed.) Use sour dough bread or brown or white bread. If the mixture is too dry, add carbonated lemon-lime soda one tablespoon at a time.
7. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes. When done, fill the rack with the dressing. Serve this dish hot.

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ROAST BONELESS LEG OF LAMB

1 boneless leg of lamb	1 tablespoon dried rosemary, coarsely crushed
3 cloves minced garlic	6 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/3 cup flour	3/4 cup water
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest	salt and ground pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Combine the flour, salt and pepper, and rosemary. Add lemon juice, zest (the lemon rind), minced garlic, and water to form a paste.
3. Cut 1/2-inch slits all over the leg of lamb and rub in the paste mixture. Insert a meat thermometer into the lamb.
4. Place the lamb on a rack in a roasting pan and add water to the bottom of the pan.
5. Roast the lamb at 425°F for 30 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 350°F.
6. Roast the meat until the internal temperature reaches 155°F. Remove the lamb and let it rest for 10 minutes before carving.

GRILLED ROSEMARY LAMB CHOPS

12 1-inch-thick loin lamb chops	6 garlic cloves, minced
3/4 cup balsamic vinegar	1 teaspoon ground pepper
6 tablespoons olive oil	3 tablespoons fresh rosemary, minced *
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice	

1. Mix all of the ingredients except the lamb chops in a small bowl. Put the lamb chops in a single layer in a long glass dish (13x9x2 inches).

*Note: If fresh rosemary is unavailable, use 3 teaspoons of dried rosemary.

2. Put the marinade over the lamb, cover with foil, and refrigerate for 4 hours. Turn the lamb chops occasionally.
3. If using a barbecue, set it to medium-high heat. As an option, use 1 1/2 cup of mesquite wood chips that have been soaked in cold water for 1 hour.
4. When wood chips begin to smoke, season lamb with salt and pepper. Cover and grill chops to desired doneness, about 4 minutes per side for medium rare. Baste often with the marinade. You may also cook the lamb chops in a preheated broiler. Serves 4.

Credits:

American Lamb Council. <<http://www.lambchef.com/comp.html>> (4-2-01).

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