



For the Love of Good Food

Gigot d'Agneau – Leg of Lamb

Spring lamb is the most succulent, which is why I want to feature it this month. In the North-West of France on the salt marshes around Mont Saint Michel in Normandy, sheep are reared that have a built-in salty taste from the food they eat. Lamb raised on salt marches anywhere are supposed to yield the best-flavored meat, but is not the most readily available.

The recipe I want to share with you this month is very old and dates from times when people didn't have ovens in their homes. It is called Gigot d'Agneau Boulangere – Bakers leg of lamb. People would prepare their dish at home in the morning, put a distinguishing mark on it, then take it down to the bakers oven to cook in the still warm oven once the bread had been baked for that day. They would retrieve their meal on their way back home from work.

Ingredients for 6

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 4 lb leg of lamb | 6 cloves of garlic |
| Butter | 2 lb peeled potatoes |
| 4-6 tablespoons chopped parsley | salt & pepper |
| 1-¼ cups chicken stock | |

1. Heat oven to 325 F. Butter a roasting pan and rub over with a clove of garlic cut in two, then discard the garlic.
2. Boil the potatoes until they are ½ cooked (just softening on the outside).
3. Drain and cut into thick slices.
4. Cover the roasting pan with the potato slices, overlapping them slightly. Season to taste.
5. Finely chop the rest of the garlic cloves and mix with the chopped parley.
6. Sprinkle onto the potatoes and add the stock.
7. Rub salt and pepper on the surface of the leg of lamb and place on top of the potatoes.
8. Cook in the oven for 1 h15 to 1 h 30 minutes until the lamb is tender and pink in the middle and the potatoes are cooked, but still firm. Turn the lamb a few times if you want to prolong the cooking to make the meat less pink.

Remove from the oven and cover with foil for 15 minutes, leave it to rest before serving with fresh green beans.

In Provence (Southern France) flavors are more pronounced, they use fresh rosemary that grows wild in the hills that is stuffed into little cuts in the leg along with slivers of garlic and salted anchovies that infuse into the meat as it roasts. The oven should be hotter, at about 375 F and cook 15 minutes per pound for pink and 20 minutes per pound if you prefer it cooked all the way through. Serve with ratatouille that is light and fresh, helping to counter the oiliness of the lamb.