

Chefs A' Field

Culinary Adventures That Begin on the Farm



MAINE ISLAND LAMB WITH WILD MUSHROOMS AND BRAISED KALE

By Sam Hayward, Fore Street Restaurant, Portland, ME

LAMB

- 2** 8-rib racks of lamb, preferably grass-fed, locally raised, of course
- 1** tsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 2** tsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ½** tsp chopped fresh thyme
- 1** tsp chopped fresh tarragon leaves
- sea salt and black pepper

LAMB SAUCE

- 1** lb lean lamb trimmings (from the shoulder or leg) cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 1** minced shallot
- 1** clove garlic, sliced very thin
- 2** cups hard cider*
- 2** cups rich veal stock or broth
- 12** oz fresh wild mushrooms**
- 1** tb extra-virgin olive oil

KALE

- 1** lb fresh tuscan kale ("cavolo nero")
- 1** medium shallot minced
- 1** tb unsalted butter, softened
- the juice of 1/2 lemon
- Extra-virgin olive oil for grilling

* We make our own hard cider every autumn. Commercial hard ciders are available in many brands in some parts of the country. If hard cider isn't available, an off-dry white wine, perhaps a Riesling with a little residual sweetness balanced with a bright acidity, would be an acceptable substitute.

**For the mushrooms, we used white matsutakes (*Armillaria ponderosa*), which enjoy an extended season during Indian summer in Northern New England. Other mushrooms, available during other seasons, include chanterelles, boletes (of various species), black trumpets, and oyster mushrooms (of various species).

sprigs of thyme, bay leaf, and parsley,
tied into a bundle with cotton
butcher's twine

If wild mushrooms aren't
available, cultivated oyster mushrooms
and shiitakes make fine
substitutes.

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FOR THE CORN BREAD:

One day in advance, ask the butcher to trim off excess fat and to remove the backbone and feather bones from two eight-rib racks of lamb, preferably grass-fed and from a local farm. At home, divide each rack into four two-rib chops. Season the chops on all sides with sea salt, fresh black pepper, and a sprinkling of the chopped herb mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

For the sauce, sear the lean lamb pieces in a heavy non-reacting skillet filmed with olive oil over high flame. When well browned, add the minced shallot, slivered garlic, mushroom trimmings, and herb bundle, and pour in the cider. Lower the flame, and simmer until reduced to 1/2 cup. Add 1/3 of the veal stock. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced to 3/4 cup. Add 1/3 of the veal stock, and reduce to 3/4 cup. Add the last of the veal stock, and reduce the sauce to about 3/4 cup. Taste and season with salt and black pepper. Strain, pressing on the solids. Keep warm.

For the braised greens, trim long stems from the greens, and tear into large pieces. Place in a wide nonreacting saucepan, and add a few drops of water. Cover and cook two to three minutes over high flame to wilt the greens. Add the minced shallot, stir, season with salt and pepper, and continue cooking until the greens are tender and fragrant, about four minutes. Just before serving, squeeze over the greens a few drops of fresh lemon juice, and stir in the butter. Taste and adjust with additional salt and pepper if desired. Remove from the flame and keep warm.

Clean and trim the wild mushrooms. If large, slice into thick sections. Sear and sauté in a large skillet filmed with olive oil. Taste and season with salt and pepper and keep warm.

Build an active fire in the grill, using large chunks or split logs sections of seasoned apple wood. Allow the fire to burn down to active embers. Dip each side of the eight lamb chops in a olive oil and place on the grill, fat side down. Cook fat down for about three minutes to render some of the fat and tenderize the tissues adjacent to the outer layer of fat. Turn each chop onto its side, and grill for four minutes on each side, or until internal temperature reads 125 degrees Fahrenheit. Move the chops away from the embers to finish cooking and conserve their fluids, about five additional minutes.

Divide the chops among four dinner plates, arranging the greens and mushrooms around the chops. Spoon a little of the sauce around the chops.

Courtesy of *Chefs A' Field*.