



RACK OF SPRING LAMB MARINATED IN GARLIC, ALLSPICE, CUMIN & THYME

SERVES 6

The marinade combines Greek, Turkish and North African flavors. For twelve guests, double the recipe as shown.

FOR THE MARINADE:

- 1 onion, grated
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- grated zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange
(see glossary)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
leaves, or 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) olive oil

FOR THE LAMB:

- 2 racks of lamb, trimmed, or 12
lamb chops
- oil for brushing chops
- salt to taste for chops

To make the marinade, combine the onion, garlic, lemon juice, zests, mustard, allspice, cumin, cayenne, thyme and ground pepper in a food processor or blender; purée. Gradually add the olive oil until the mixture is blended.

☞ Place the lamb in a glass or plastic container and coat the meat with the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or up to 2 days.

☞ To cook the racks, preheat an oven to 350°F (180°C). Sear the racks in a cast-iron frying pan over high heat or on a hot griddle until browned on all sides, then transfer to a roasting pan and roast in the oven until a meat thermometer inserted in the center of a rack

Spring Lamb Marinated in Garlic, Allspice, Cumin & Thyme; Stuffed Eggplant; Artichoke Hearts, Tomatoes & Currants; Asparagus & Potatoes with Almonds & Mint (page 174)

reads 125°F (52°C), about 10–12 minutes. Let the lamb rest for 10 minutes on a carving board, covered with aluminum foil, before slicing; meat will be medium rare.

☞ To cook the chops instead, preheat a broiler (griller). Or, prepare a fire in a grill and position the oiled grill rack 4–6 inches (10–15 cm) above the fire. Brush the chops with oil, sprinkle with salt and broil or grill them for 3 minutes on each side for rare, or 4 minutes on each side for medium rare.

ARTICHOKE HEARTS WITH TOMATOES & CURRANTS

SERVES 6

Sweet-sour artichoke preparations such as this one are common in the Mediterranean.

- 6 large (about 4-inch/10-cm diameter) artichokes
- 1 lemon half
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) olive oil
- 1 cup (8 fl oz/250 ml) water, stock or dry white wine
- 2 cups (12 oz/375 g) peeled, diced tomatoes or drained and chopped canned plum tomatoes
- ½ cup (3 oz/90 g) dried currants, soaked in warm water to cover for 10 minutes
- 2 tablespoons honey
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Cut the stems and tops off of the artichokes, break off and discard most of the outer leaves and remove all the rest with a sharp knife. Scoop out the fuzzy chokes with a small sharp spoon. Rub the cut surfaces with the lemon half and float the artichoke hearts in a bowl of cold water mixed with the lemon juice until all the artichokes

are prepared. Drain and pat dry just before cooking.

☞ Pour the olive oil into a large sauté pan and place over medium-high heat. Add the artichoke hearts and toss them to coat with the oil and add the water, stock or wine. Cover the pan and steam until the artichoke hearts are tender-crisp, about 12–15 minutes (most of the liquid will have been absorbed). Add the tomatoes, drained currants and honey; stir well and simmer, uncovered, until the artichokes are tender when pierced with a knife and the pan juices have reduced, about 10 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper and add more honey or lemon juice if desired. Transfer the artichoke hearts to a platter and spoon the sauce on top.

STUFFED EGGPLANT

SERVES 6

Be sure to precook the eggplant shells to make them tender and completely edible.

- 3 baby globe eggplants (aubergines) or 6 slender (Asian) eggplants (aubergines)
- salt
- ½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1½ cups (9 oz/280 g) peeled, diced tomatoes
- ¼ cup (¾ oz/10 g) chopped fresh parsley
- freshly ground pepper to taste
- ½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) water

Cut the eggplants in half lengthwise. With a sharp knife, carefully score the flesh and remove most of the eggplant pulp, leaving a shell that is ¼ inch (6 mm) thick. Dice the pulp and set aside. Salt the eggplant shells and let

sit, flesh sides down, in a colander for 1 hour, then rinse and pat dry.

☞ Preheat an oven to 350°F (180°C). Warm 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large sauté pan. Add the onion and cook until tender and translucent, about 10 minutes. Set aside in a bowl. In the same pan, heat 6 tablespoons (3 fl oz/90 ml) of the olive oil, add the diced eggplant and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic, oregano and tomatoes and simmer for about 3 minutes. Add the onion and parsley to this mixture. Season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside.

☞ Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large sauté pan and cook the eggplant shells, turning once or twice, for a few minutes to soften them. Then place them side by side in an oiled baking dish and stuff with the reserved filling. Add the water to the pan, cover and bake until very tender, about 45 minutes.



Plant a selection of Mediterranean herbs in terra-cotta pots. They make beautiful table displays and the leaves can be used in myriad recipes.