

4 medium lamb shanks
8 tsp sea salt
4 tsp freshly ground
black pepper
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely
chopped
4 sprigs thyme
150g butter
Lemon wedges

For the pesto

75ml extra-virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves
50g pine nuts
50g Parmesan
2 bunches fresh basil
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley
2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
2 tbsp honey

Serves 4

lambo in camo

[Lamb shanks and pesto]

Our love for lamb borders on obsession. I reckon that because our Karoo lamb has that specific flavour from eating wild mint and dry rosemary-like bushes, we have the best-tasting lamb in the world.

Don't overcomplicate the ingredients. While at first the straightforward approach of doing simple lamb shanks with a nice pesto wouldn't have occurred to me, I have realised the beauty of the food chain and to appreciate why established combinations work.

I thought I'd try it on the braai to give it a bit of that incredible smoky flavour. If you cook it slowly, the fat starts to crisp. With lamb, when you taste it for what it is – especially on the shank because it's so close to the bone – you get that incredible lamb flavour better than on other cuts. Rich lamb goes very well with something fresh and herbal so when braaied and served with a green sauce, it's the perfect marriage – whether that sauce is pesto, salsa verde or even mint sauce. I also include something sweet by adding in wholegrain mustard.

Try make the onion and garlic surround the shank. It's best if it's not too tightly wrapped in foil – there needs to be some distance between the foil and the shank, to allow for better steaming and prevent hard roasting that will toughen the meat.

1/ To make the pesto, blend the olive oil, garlic and pine nuts in a blender until fine. Add the Parmesan, basil and parsley and blend until chunky (you still want some texture in the sauce). Mix in the mustard and honey until well combined.

2/ Rub the shanks with one teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Cut four 70cm-long heavy-duty foil pieces. Evenly divide the onion, garlic and thyme onto the middle of each foil sheet. Then place a shank on each piece. Wrap tightly and evenly.

3/ Cook over medium-high heat for two hours, ensuring there are no flames. Remove from the heat and unwrap.

4/ Melt the butter in a pot until it starts to turn brown. Season each shank with one teaspoon salt and, with a pastry brush, brush on the brown butter.

5/ Place the shanks over medium-high heat. Keep basting with the butter until they're a delicious dark brown on the outside.

6/ To serve, place the shanks on a platter with a dollop of pesto on each. Serve family-style with the lemon wedges.



Beer | Porcupine Quill Brewery Karoo Red

Wine | Waterford Cabernet