



Menu du Jour

02 Jan 06

Braised Lamb Shanks
Roasted Spring Vegetables
Garlic Mashed Potatoes
(Serves four)

Braised Lamb Shanks

Lamb shanks – the bottom portion of the leg – are a traditional comfort food that requires long cooking to make them tender. This recipe combines stovetop smoking and slow cooking to produce fall-off-the-bone tender meat with a flavorful sauce. Although wonderful the day it is prepared, the meal is even better after sitting for a day.

For this entrée, you'll need a stovetop smoker such as Camerons Stovetop Smoker and a slow cooker (alternatively, the lamb shanks could be braised in a 325 degrees F. oven for 3 to 3 1/2 hours after being smoked).

4 large lamb shanks (about 3 3/4 to 4 1/2 lbs.)
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium yellow onions, peeled and chopped
2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
2 large celery ribs, cleaned and chopped
6 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
1 (28-ounce) can petite diced tomatoes
1 tablespoon minced fresh flat leaf parsley
2 teaspoons dried basil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
10 Tellicherry peppercorns
2 cups Merlot
2 cups beef stock, homemade preferred
Coarse kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Trim any exterior fat from the shanks and season the shanks with salt and pepper.

Prepare the stovetop smoker by adding 2 tablespoons of wood chips (1 tablespoon of hickory and 1 tablespoon of apple) under the drip pan. Place the lamb shanks in the smoker and tent aluminum foil over the shanks. Leave one corner of the foil loose and heat the smoker over medium heat. Once smoke begins to show, tightly seal the foil and smoke the shanks for 20 minutes. Remove smoker from the stovetop and place shanks on a plate.



Heat the oil in a large heavy skillet over medium high heat. Add two lamb shanks and brown them on all sides until golden brown. Remove them to a plate and brown the other two lamb shanks. Transfer the shanks to the plate.

Drain off all but 1 tablespoon of drippings from the skillet. Add the onions, carrots, and celery to the skillet and cook them, stirring constantly, for 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the garlic, tomatoes, parsley, basil, peppercorns, wine, and stock and heat to boiling. Transfer the vegetables and liquid to a slow cooker set on high. Place the lamb shanks on top of the vegetables and cook the lamb shanks, covered, for 4 to 6 hours on high or 9 to 10 hours on low. Remove the shanks and keep warm while finishing the sauce.

Strain the sauce into a medium saucepan through a colander and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Allow sauce to reduce and thicken, about 15 minutes.

Roasted Spring Vegetables

20 stalks asparagus, ends trimmed
8 green onions, trimmed
1 red pepper, cored and sliced into eighths
1 yellow pepper, cored and sliced into eighths
4 shallots, peeled and sliced
4 Roma tomatoes, cut in half lengthwise & seeded
1/4 cup good quality olive oil
1 tablespoon coarse kosher salt
4 large cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Place all of the ingredients in a large bowl and toss well. Marinate at room temperature for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Spread the vegetables onto a baking sheet in a single layer. Roast for 30 to 40 minutes, turning occasionally, until the vegetables are crisp-tender and nicely caramelized.



Mashed Garlic Potatoes

5 large Russet potatoes (about 10 ounces each)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/4 cup sour cream
1/2 – 3/4 cup cream, scalded
Kosher salt and cracked white pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Wash and dry potatoes. Coat lightly with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake in a preheated oven for one hour or until easily pierced with a knife. Cool. Remove flesh from potatoes and mash.

Melt the butter in a medium stockpot over medium heat; add the garlic and sauté for 5 minutes or until lightly toasted (don't allow the garlic to burn or it will become bitter).

Add the potatoes and the sour cream to the pot. Mash to combine. Slowly add the scalded cream until the potatoes reach the desired consistency. (The potatoes will tighten as they cook.) Cook for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring often, until potatoes are very hot.



Cooking and Presentation



Lamb Shanks After Smoking And Browning



In The Slow Cooker With The Sautéed Vegetables, Stock, and Wine



After Braising For 3 Hours In The Slow Cooker On High

Plate Presentation

To serve, portion the roasted spring vegetables onto warmed serving plates and mound mashed potatoes in the center of each plate. Place a lamb shank atop the mashed potatoes and spoon the reduced braising liquid over the top. Garnish with fresh parsley, slivered green onions, rosemary sprigs, or fresh mint leaves.