

Slow-Cooked Lamb Shanks Recipe

Ingredients: Serves 4

4 lamb shanks
175g yoghurt
One 5cm piece of cinnamon stick, broken up
The inner seeds of 6 cardamom pods
4 cloves
2 teaspoons cumin seeds
2 dried red chillies, scissor snipped
4-5 tablespoons sunflower or plain olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
5cm piece of root ginger, finely grated
4-5 large garlic cloves, crushed to a pulp
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
50g blanched almonds, soaked in 150ml boiling water for 20 minutes
10-12 fresh mint leaves, finely chopped

Method:

Remove any excess fat and membrane from the lamb shanks and wipe with a cloth. Prick them all over with a fork. Preheat a small, heavy pan or a griddle over medium heat. When hot, reduce the heat to low and add the cinnamon sticks, cardamom, and cloves. Roast gently until they begin to release their aroma. Transfer to a plate to cool, then grind in a coffee grinder. Whisk the yoghurt until really smooth. Remove half the yoghurt and blend it thoroughly with the ground spices. Reserve the remaining yoghurt. Place the lamb shanks on a large plate and add the spice-laced yoghurt. Rub it in well and cover the plate with food wrap. Leave to marinate in the fridge for 4-5 hours or overnight. Bring it to room temperature before cooking. Heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan over medium heat and fry the onions until they are soft and light brown. Stir regularly. Add the ginger and garlic and continue to fry for 1-2 minutes. Add the chili powder and turmeric, cook for about a minute and add one tablespoon of the reserved whisked yoghurt. Cook for 2 minutes and add the nutmeg, salt and the marinated lamb shanks, making sure you add any remaining marinade too. Stir them over a medium heat until the lamb turns opaque. Add the remaining yoghurt and 300ml lukewarm water. Mix well and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan with double thickness of foil, making sure it does not touch the food, then place the lid on. Seal the edges by pressing the foil into the saucepan rim. Reduce the heat to very low and simmer gently for 40-45 minutes. Meanwhile, puree the almonds in a blender. Remove the foil from the pan and add the pureed almonds. Stir well and simmer gently for 2-3 minutes. Simmer a little longer if you prefer a thicker consistency. Stir in the chopped mint and serve.