

Spiced Roast Leg of Lamb Recipe

Ingredients:

1 small leg of lamb, about 1 kg, trimmed
4 tablespoons ginger-garlic paste* (refer below)
2 1/2 teaspoons red chili powder
120ml vegetable oil
3 cloves
4 green cardamom pods
3 black cardamom pods
5cm cassia bark or cinnamon stick
2 star anise
1 bay leaf
4 medium onions, finely sliced
2 teaspoons ground coriander (cilantro)
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

Method:

Make a few deep cuts in the surface of the lamb. Mix the ginger-garlic paste with 1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder and 3 tablespoons oil, and massage over the lamb and into the cuts. Marinate at room temperature for 2 hours, then in the fridge for another 2 hours. Preheat oven to 170 degrees Celsius. Heat the remaining oil in a large flameproof casserole (which can hold the lamb). Add the whole spices and bay leaf. Sauté for 1 minute, then add the onions and cook until softened. Stir in the remaining 1 teaspoon chili powder and other ground spices and sauté until the oil leaves the masala. Stir in the tomato paste and salt, then add the leg of lamb. Seal the pan with foil and a lid and cook in the oven for 50 minutes to 1 1/2 hours until the lamb is very tender, turning it once or twice during cooking. Take out the lamb and put under a hot grill for a few minutes, turning to lightly char the surface. Meanwhile, let the sauce bubble on the hob to reduce and thicken, then strain. Carve the lamb and serve with the sauce.

*Ginger-garlic paste:

This is widely used in Indian recipes. To prepare, blend equal quantities of peeled garlic and ginger with 10% of the total weight in water, using a blender or mini-processor. The paste should be smooth and very fine. Store in a sealed container in the fridge. If you wish to keep the ginger-garlic paste for longer, add 5% vegetable oil and 2% lemon juice as you blend the paste; this improves the keeping quality and lightens the color of the paste. You can always freeze ginger-garlic paste in an ice-cube tray for future use.

This is a traditional recipe with Afghan influence. The combination of braising and roasting makes the lamb really succulent and juicy.