



# Understanding Lamb

There is no other meat like it: supple and velvety, delicate yet rich, lamb has a flavor that seems to spring from the mountain pastures, herb-covered grasslands, and other pastoral settings in which lambs are typically raised. Whether it is a pair of tender, rosy chops from a suckling lamb or a glorious, garlic-studded leg from a fuller-flavored yearling, everything about this meat proclaims its purity; indeed, it is that pristine taste of nature, and of youth, that allows lamb to take to such a wide range of flavorful accompaniments and has made it a cherished food of so many cuisines. Restaurant chefs in America have long championed lamb, and yet home cooks in this country have traditionally prepared it less often than they have other meats in their own kitchens. That is starting to change, though, as tastes become worldlier and good-quality lamb is increasingly available at butcher shops and supermarkets in an inspiring variety of ages, breeds, and cuts. On the following pages, we unlock the secrets and illuminate the subtleties of this fascinating ingredient, sharing the experiences of cooks from around the globe and presenting recipes—from a classic spice-infused Greek moussaka to an aromatic Middle Eastern stew—that showcase lamb's incomparable beauty. —THE EDITORS





Lamb salad. Facing page, seven-hour leg of lamb.  
Previous pages, lambs grazing in a field in North  
America. (See page 66 for recipes.)











# Lamb Around the World

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE SHOCK I had as I walked down my parents' street in Beirut and almost stepped in a pool of blood. The civil war had just ended, and I couldn't understand why I would be stumbling across such a gruesome sight. Then I remembered. It was early morning, and our local butcher must have been slaughtering a lamb in his shop, a practice common to this day in Lebanon. § I walked inside the store and watched him as he laid the head and trotters

on his block and carefully cleaned the innards in a bucket of water. He hung the precious liver on a hook and proceeded to cut the carcass in half along the spine before hanging it up, too. As customers entered the shop, asking for specific parts, he'd take the lamb down and cut it to order.

Such a scene is a fixture of daily life all over the Middle East and North Africa, where lamb is an essential, even revered, part of both everyday and celebratory cooking. It is rare to find anything but lamb at butcher shops in this part of the world; there isn't enough grazing land for cows, and goats are too destructive to keep in large, uncontrolled flocks. It was in the Middle East, historians believe, that sheep were first domesticated, some 11,000 years ago, not only for meat but also for milk and wool. To this day, on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, as in the Alps and elsewhere, shepherds follow ancient farming methods, herding their flocks down from the high grasslands onto the plains when cooler weather arrives.

I grew up eating fresh lamb every which way: cooked to tenderness in tomato-based *yakhneh*, or stews, that were flavored with cinnamon, allspice, and citrus zest; ground and stuffed into eggplants; minced with onions, spices, and bulgur for kibbeh; and more. We ate or used every part of the animal. The liver was a delicacy, served raw for breakfast, cut into cubes with fresh mint, and the meaty bones went into a large pot with hulled grains of whole wheat to make *h'risseh*, a comforting porridge.

It was only when I left Beirut for London in 1973 and began to travel extensively in the West that I realized that the rest of the world approached lamb quite differently. In Great Britain, the meat—most often a big cut, like a whole leg—tends to be cooked simply: roasted, say, and served with vinegar-spiked mint sauce and red currant jelly. At first, I found the notion of eating lamb with sweet-tart accompaniments rather odd, but I quickly came to savor the way the silky jelly and the sharp-sweet sauce cut into the rich meat and made it taste lighter. I learned that the French prefer more-straightforward combinations, as in their lamb and vegetable *navarin* stew or a rib rack roasted with herbs like rosemary and thyme.

By contrast, in the United States, I learned that except at restaurants, where I found wonderfully creative lamb salads and stews, the meat was a

bit of an outcast, not nearly so popular as beef or pork. When I was testing recipes for one of my cookbooks while living in a borrowed apartment in New York City, I would walk to the supermarket a few blocks away and stand before the meat case, wondering where I was going to find the necks and bellies and boned shoulder shanks that I needed. Eventually, I learned that specialty markets and butcher shops carried larger selections, and at farmers' markets in New York City and elsewhere, I bought fresh lamb, both meaty cuts and offal, of impeccable quality that was as delicious as any I grew up with in Beirut.

LAMB IS AN INHERENTLY EXPRESSIVE FOOD; more than the flesh of any other animal, its rosy meat speaks of the place in which the animal was raised. The Scots have their treasured lambs from the Shetland Islands, which graze on heather, and the French prize their *agneaux de pré-salé*: sheep that roam the sea salt-kissed meadows of coastal Normandy and Brittany. The flavor of the meat carries hints of the ocean and the wild herbs that grow along its shores.

The distinctive characteristics of lamb probably have as much to do with nurture as with nature, though. In *The River Cottage Meat Book* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2004), the cookbook author Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall explains that because sheep thrive easily on all kinds of terrain, they are more likely to be raised and fed outdoors, on natural pasture, instead of in feedlots. So it is in Great Britain, where Fearnley-Whittingstall lives, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, the two top lamb-exporting countries in the world. Even in the United States, where most lambs are fed corn to fatten them up before slaughter, they still have spent most of their lives eating grass.

The breed of the lamb also affects flavor. Those bred for wool as well as meat tend to taste gamier than those raised exclusively for meat, which are almost always larger. Still, while many lamb lovers have preferences for a specific kind of sheep—I, for one, am partial to fat-tailed sheep, a variety that's common across the Middle East—lamb breeds have not become designer labels, as Angus beef and Berkshire pork have. Not yet, that is.

More than anything else, age determines the taste of lamb; the younger the animal is, the sweeter, milder, and more tender its meat. That's one reason people go crazy for spring lamb—traditionally, an animal born in the winter and slaughtered in the spring—although, in reality, because dif-

**Beet stew with lamb meatballs, an Iraqi-Jewish specialty, facing page (see page 66 for a recipe).**



ferent breeds are slaughtered at different times of year, the term doesn't denote seasonality anymore. In fact, the retail term *spring lamb* nowadays refers to the age of the animal (six to 12 months), regardless of the time of year it was slaughtered. Terminology aside, the delicate flavor of young lamb is coveted in many parts of the world; the Spanish, southern Italians, and Greeks have a particular predilection for tender, pale-colored milk-fed lamb that's less than three months old.

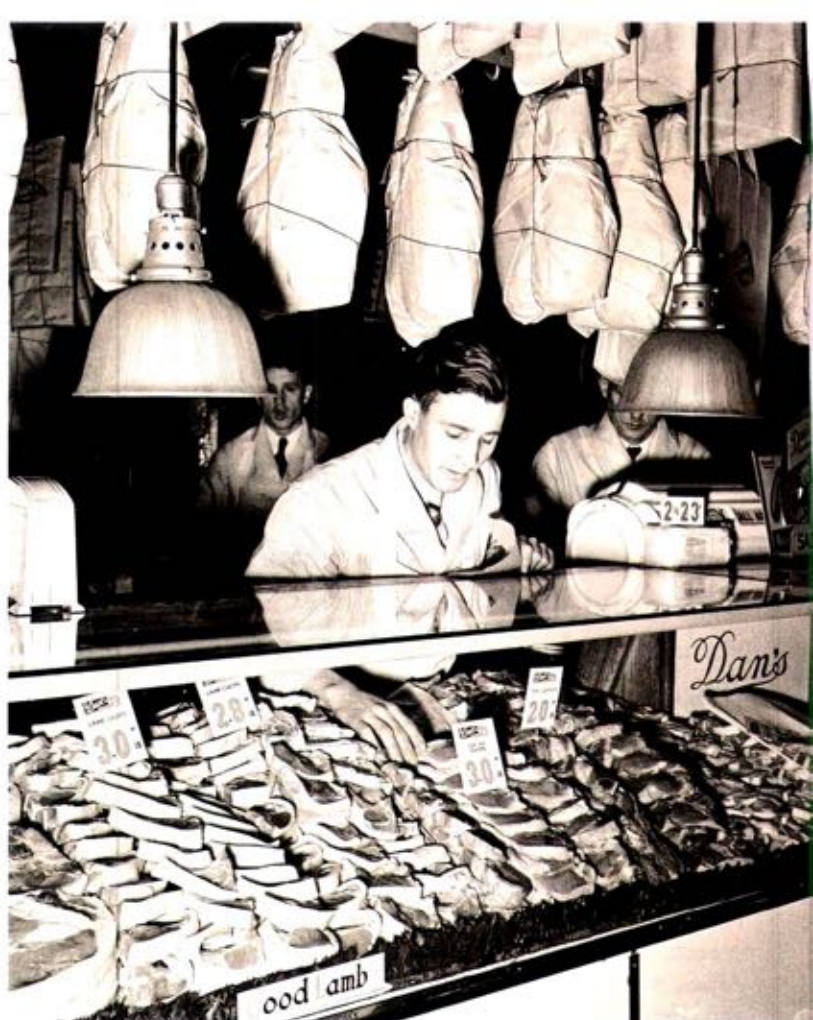
In much of the Arab world, cooks prefer stronger-tasting and, often, fatter lamb: usually animals that are older than what's known as hogget or yearling (12 months) and often approaching mutton (24 months). Such general preferences notwithstanding, the ways of preparing lamb in Arab countries can vary markedly. In Morocco, inexpensive cuts are ground for humble street fare, like cumin-spiked merguez sausage, while pricier cuts are left on the bone for slow-cooked tagines. But in Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey, the best cuts are usually ground or cut into small pieces. At one of my favorite restaurants, Imam Çağdas, a kebab shop in the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep, the cooks still mince the meat by hand, wielding enormous knives like sabers, rocking them back and forth to render the meat into a luscious pulp.

The grandest of all the minced lamb dishes is kibbeh (known as *köfte* in Turkey). I have vivid childhood memories of my mother and grandmother sitting on either side of a large white marble mortar containing chunks of raw lamb. They took turns using a heavy wooden pestle to pound the meat into a paste with onion and tail fat before blending in bulgur wheat and seasoning the mixture with salt, pepper, cinnamon, and allspice. Then they'd shape the kibbeh into patties and serve it, raw. I would hover nearby, ready to grab the first taste. Such preparations are a staple of meze platters across the Middle East and offer a wonderful way to relish the herbaceous nuances of the meat.

MORE THAN JUST AN INGREDIENT, lamb has long been a potent symbol in the ancient mythologies of both Eastern and Western cultures and one of the most important sacrificial animals in the rituals of the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths. It is the traditional centerpiece of the feasts of Passover, Easter, and Eid el-Adha, the Muslim holiday that commemorates God's sparing of Abraham's son, Ishmael. Around the world, cooks celebrate these occasions with whole, spit-roasted lamb, whether it's the Greek dish *arnáki paskalinó*, flavored with fresh herbs, or the Moroccan delicacy *mechoui*, which is cooked inside pit ovens dug into the ground. Many families I know in Morocco, Lebanon, and other places keep a lamb in their yard, fattening it on mulberry and grape leaves in preparation for a feast. I can still recall the image of my grandmother leaning over a fence to feed her big-eyed lambs by hand.

My grandmother's lamb, her marble mortar, and the butcher on my parents' street in Beirut are memories now, but my appreciation of this food is as strong as ever. A few years ago, while visiting the warrenlike souks of the ancient Syrian city of Aleppo, I came upon two old men, dressed in the long robes known as abayas, who were preparing a lamb to roast for a wedding party. It was a scene I can only describe as biblical. I stood for a while admiring their dexterity and purposefulness. As I walked away, I wished I could have been invited to the feast. —Anisa Helou, author of *Mediterranean Street Food* (HarperCollins, 2002)

An American butcher shop circa 1940, top right. Right, Tajik women in China eating laghman (noodles with mutton) at a wedding ceremony. Facing page, lamb chops with mint salsa verde (see page 67 for a recipe).











Moussaka, a lamb and eggplant casserole, seasoned with cinnamon and ginger and topped with a creamy béchamel (see page 68 for a recipe).







## LAMB PART TWO

# A Guide to Lamb Cuts

The meaty leg of lamb and the elegant rib rack get all the love in the United States, but getting to know cuts from other parts of the animal can vastly expand your cooking repertoire to include dishes like hearty stews, juicy burgers, lavish roasts, and deeply flavorful tagines, curries, and kebabs. When buying lamb, look for fine-grained, rosy-red meat with firm, white fat. As a rule, lamb labeled USDA Prime or Choice and grass-fed lamb sold at farmers' markets have the best flavor and texture. Below are 12 versatile lamb cuts and suggestions for how to cook them; at right is a visual primer on where these cuts come from. —*Hunter Lewis*

**Square-Cut Shoulder** This flavorful, ample cut consists of nicely marbled meat that has a pronounced sweetness. Because the shoulder muscles do more work than the leg muscles, they're less tender and thus take well to long, slow roasting or braising. Ask your butcher to remove the bones and prepare the meat according to your needs: rolled and tied for a roast, cut into chunks for a stew, or ground for burgers, moussaka (see page 68 for a recipe), or Middle Eastern spiced lamb dishes like kibbeh.

**Arm Shoulder Chop** This inexpensive cut from the lamb's shoulder section has rich marbling and can be cooked in a number of ways; try marinating (see "Rubs and Marinades," page 67) and pan-frying or broiling them to medium rare or braising them in red wine and herbs.

**Stew Meat** You can make rich stews—from French lamb *navarin* (see page 68 for a recipe) to Indian *rogan josh*—using pieces cut from almost any part of a lamb. We think stew meat from the shoulder is best, as it becomes incomparably tender during stewing and braising. You can save money by buying deboned portions of the shoulder and cutting it into one-and-a-half-inch cubes yourself.

**Fore Shank** The shank is the muscular bottom portion of the leg. It is the ultimate cut for slow braises that require rich, intense flavor, such as North African tagines. Long cooking causes the connective tissue to break down and yields succulent, fork-tender pieces. A rich lamb shank takes well to bright-tasting garnishes like *gremolata* (a mixture of lemon zest and chopped parsley) or sweet ones like the apricot chutney on page 69.

**Neck Slices** Typically sold as thick, bone-in slices, lamb neck is inexpensive and full of flavor. Like oxtail, neck meat also has plenty of collagen, a natural compound in red meat that lends a silky richness to stews, braises, *ragùs*, and other slow-cooked dishes.

**Breast** This inexpensive, rectangular-shaped cut consists of meat and rib bones; it's often trimmed and sold as spareribs. Boneless breast can be stuffed with bread crumbs, rolled, and braised or roasted. You can also buy ribs (often called *riblets*) separately; they're great grilled and basted with a tangy-sweet vinegar sauce.

**Rack of Lamb** A whole rack of lamb—comprising seven or eight ribs from the center of the animal—makes a supreme roast. A classic preparation calls for a crust of herbs and coarse salt and roasting over high heat. For a more striking presentation, ask your butcher to french the rack—that is, remove the layer of fat and thin strips of meat and muscle extending to the ends of rib bones—or do it yourself following the instructions on page 94.

**Rib Chops** One of the most popular cuts is individual rib chops, which can range in size from dainty New Zealand chops to meaty Colorado ones. Each has a tender eye of lean, pink meat and a thick layer of flavorful fat.

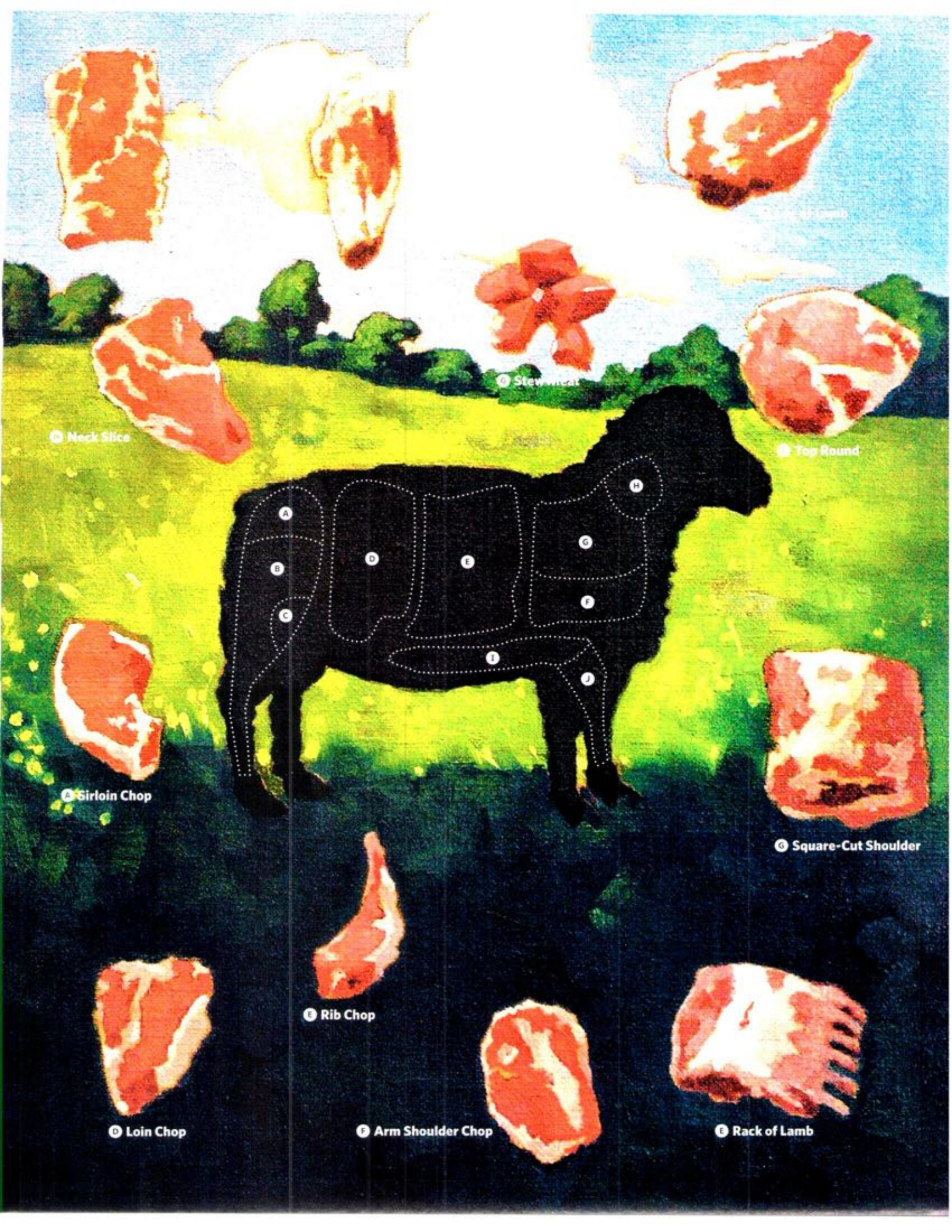
**Loin Chops** These diminutive T-bone steaks contain a portion of the loin and tenderloin and are the leanest, tenderest, and priciest cuts. Cooked quickly on the grill or under the broiler, they develop a caramelized crust and have a pink, juicy center. Ask for chops that are at least an inch thick if you like your lamb medium rare. The whole loin is called a saddle; two loin chops attached by the backbone are called an English chop.

**Sirloin Chop** The thick, inexpensive steaks cut from the fat, sirloin end of the lamb's leg and hip section are tender enough to grill or broil, steak house style, and are wonderful served with mint sauce, scalloped potatoes, and creamed spinach.

**Leg** This generous cut, which can weigh anywhere from five to nine pounds, is the perennial choice for holiday feasts. The whole leg—which comprises both the narrow shank and the plump sirloin—can be simply seasoned with salt and pepper or a spice rub and roasted with the bone in. The leg is available in several different forms: sirloin end, shank end, short leg, and frenched. You may also ask your butcher to debone and butterfly the leg so that it can be splayed on the grill or stuffed, rolled, tied, and roasted.

**Top Round** This fist-size, one- to two-pound cut is fairly new on the market; it's a large muscle from the leg that has the full flavor of tougher cuts but is tender enough to be grilled or pan-roasted. Grilled, sliced top round makes a perfect centerpiece for a composed salad like the one shown on page 66.





A Neck Slice

B Stew Meat

C Top Round

D Sirloin Chop

E Square-Cut Shoulder

F Loin Chop

G Rib Chop

H Arm Shoulder Chop

I Rack of Lamb





Rack of lamb with rosemary and thyme (see page 68 for a recipe).



# A Shepherd's Life

HENRY ETCHEVERRY IS ONE OF THE LAST OF IDAHO'S Basque sheep ranchers. His forebears settled here—in a terrain not so different from the Basques' native Pyrenees—after emigrating from France and Spain in the 19th and 20th centuries. Deep in the state's Caribou National Forest, in fact, you can still find aspen trees with the name of Etcheverry's father, Jean Pierre Etcheverry, carved into them—enduring signposts from a dwindling Basque diaspora. The way these Basque-descended farmers tend their

flocks appears almost quaint in this age of industrial agriculture, but their methods are in fact characteristic of how most American lamb is raised. Some 7 million sheep are born each year in the United States, and they spend most of their existence in settings as natural and bucolic as the 500,000 acres where Etcheverry's lambs graze.

Every morning during the late spring and summer, Henry Etcheverry, a solidly built, straight-talking 60-year-old, drives his pickup truck from his home in the town of Lava Hot Springs into the nearby mountains to

take supplies to his crew of 12 herders, who live at simple campsites while they move Etcheverry's 16,000 head of sheep across the range. To accompany Etcheverry on one of these trips is to see sheepherding much as it has been done for centuries. On one such excursion last July, Etcheverry stopped his truck on a dirt road to talk with Romulo Inga, a Peruvian herder who is responsible for about 2,300 of Etcheverry's sheep. In Spanish they discussed how much rice and cooking oil Inga would need for the coming days and where Inga, who herds on horseback, would set up camp the next day. As the two men talked, Inga's sheep advanced down a steep, grassy mountainside, breakfasting on anise, sage, wild parsley, larkspur, and other wild herbs and grasses, which filled the air with their aromas.

"A lamb is like a peach," Etcheverry said, pointing to a particularly broad-shouldered animal with a speckled face and tight, rippled wool. "You have to pick it at the right moment." This lamb, like thousands of others pastured here, was born in January and was moved with its mother to these high-country rangelands in May. Sometime in August, when the lamb would reach at least 125 pounds—the weight Etcheverry has determined to be ideal for attaining the right ratio of muscle to fat—it

would be trucked to Colorado, where the animal would be finished on corn and other feed before being slaughtered and sold.

A few days later Etcheverry and his wife, Kathy, drove to the home of another Basque sheep rancher, Jean Leon Jauregui, for dinner. Jauregui's wife, Josie, had prepared a meal of lamb chops grilled over aspen coals with white beans and leek soup. At the end of the supper, over plates of flaky cherry tart and glasses of a Basque liqueur made with sloe berries and anise, the men talked about the past, about Etcheverry's father, Jean Pierre, who'd worked on the range until his final years. "We sheep men retire when our arms are folded and we're in a box," Etcheverry said.

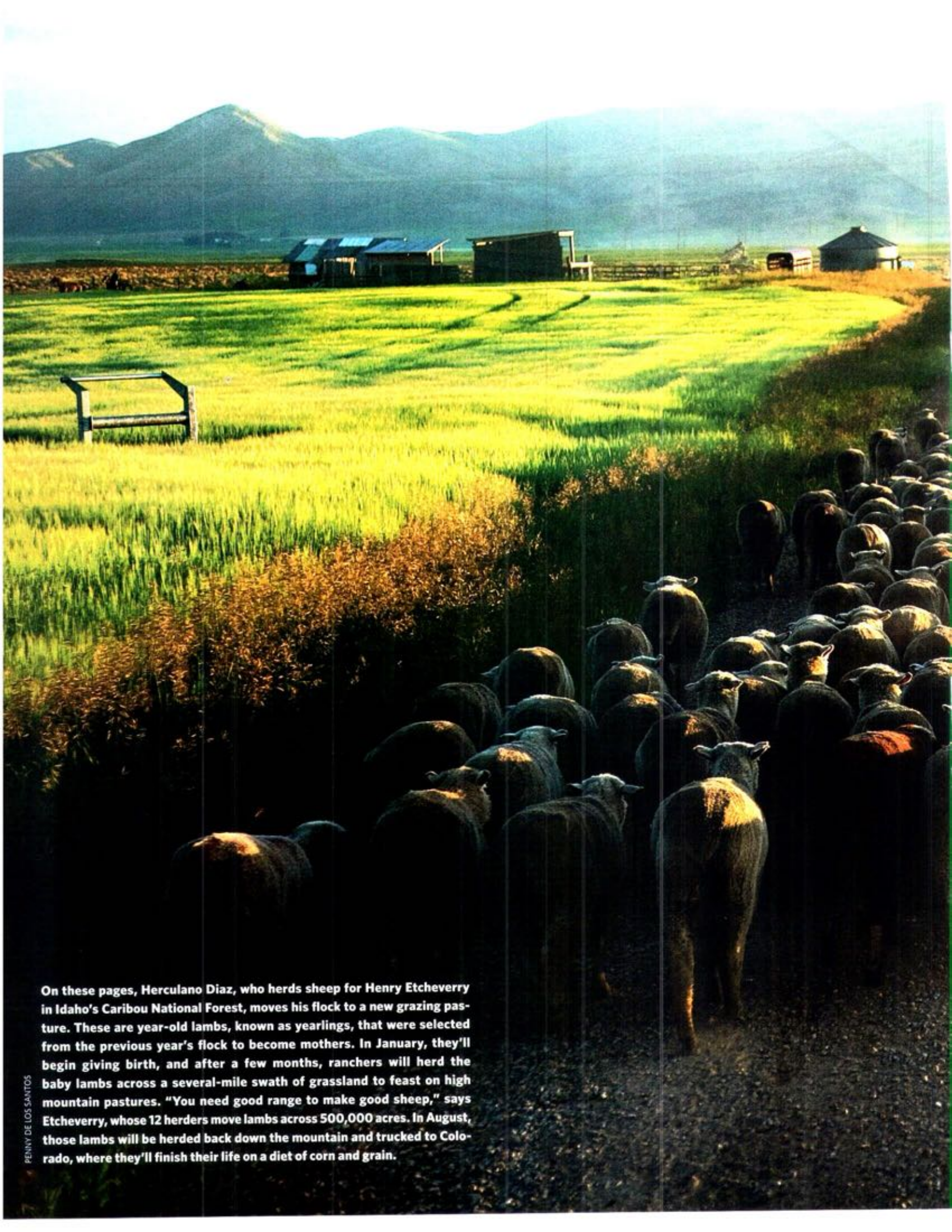
Then Jauregui raised a toast. "Your dad was the best man that God made," he said. —Hunter Lewis

## Lamb Varieties

The flavor and the texture of lamb can differ considerably from place to place, reflecting everything from what the animals eat to the physical characteristics of particular breeds. Because sheep farming remains a small industry in the United States when compared with those of beef and pork, your local supermarket is more likely to carry frozen cuts of lamb raised in Australia or New Zealand—the world's top lamb-exporting countries—than it is fresh domestic meat. Most **New Zealand lamb** is almost entirely pasture fed, usually in fields rich with ryegrass and clover, which accounts for the meat's characteristic leanness. New Zealand lamb is also distinctly flavored: the most common breed in the country, Merino, is also raised for wool and has a strong, almost mutton-y flavor. Because New Zealand lambs come to market very young, typically at six or seven months of age, they have smaller frames that yield petite, tender rib chops. **Australian lamb**, though it's slaughtered when a bit older, has a milder taste and richer marbling—the results of both breeding and the fact that the animals are sometimes fed grain during the last weeks of their lives. Free-range, grass-fed **Icelandic lamb** is exceptionally fine grained and mild tasting; it is prized by chefs and increasingly sold in the United States at stores like Whole Foods Market. It is available only in the fall, when Iceland's lambs (of a shaggy-haired pure breed known simply as Icelandic lamb) reach their market weight. Most varieties of American lamb are cross-bred from wool breeds like Columbia and meat breeds such as the Suffolk and are raised in large herds in the high rangelands of the Western states. **Colorado lamb**, one of the most predominant domestic varieties, is pasture fed and given a diet of corn before slaughter to make it yield princely cuts of richly marbled meat. Farmers east of the Mississippi typically raise smaller herds of small, lean-fleshed, and entirely grass-fed sheep. Farmers' markets are the best sources for grass-fed lamb. —Karen Shimizu

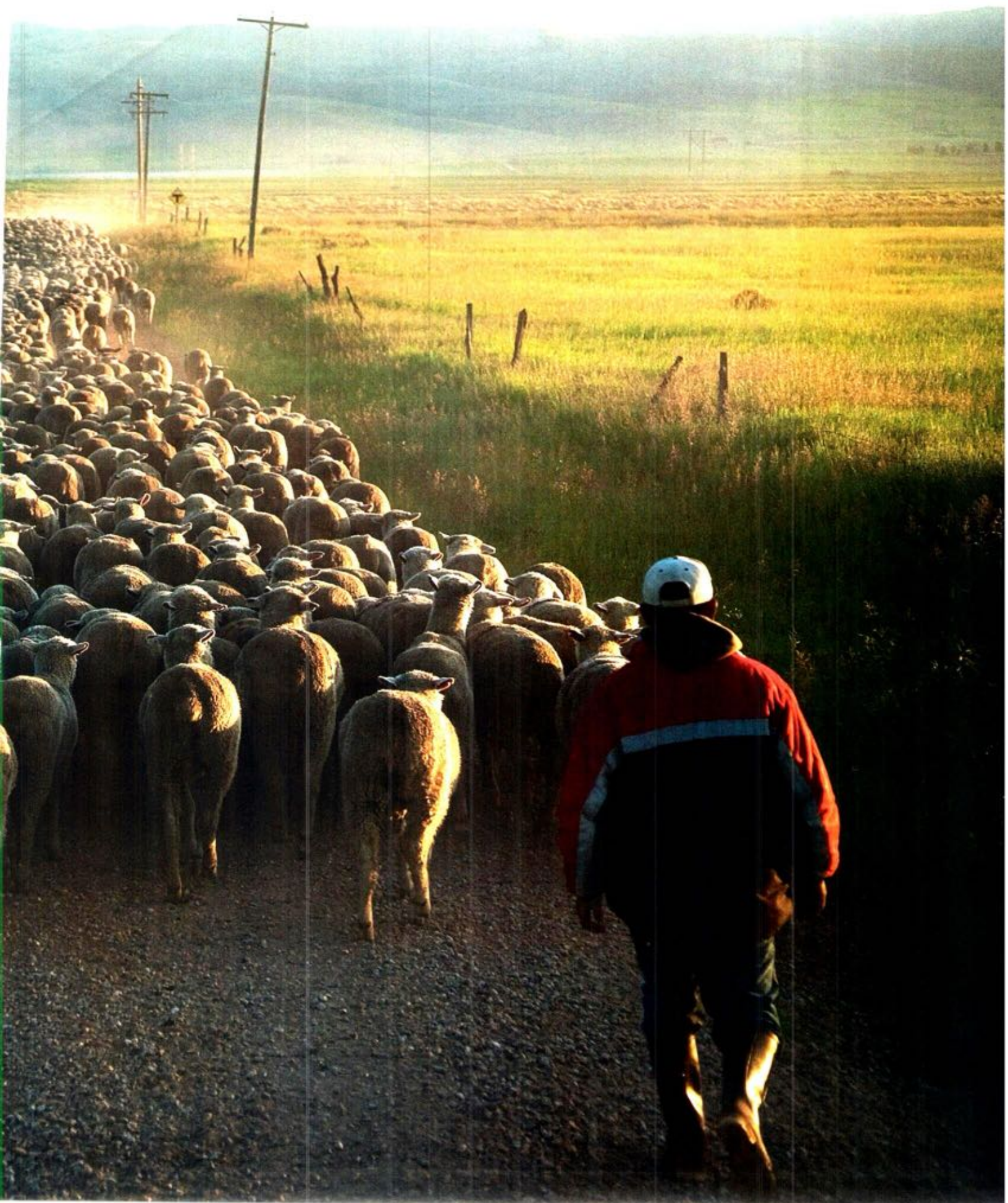
To accompany Etcheverry and his flocks into Idaho's forests is to witness sheepherding as it has been done for centuries





On these pages, Herculano Diaz, who herds sheep for Henry Etcheverry in Idaho's Caribou National Forest, moves his flock to a new grazing pasture. These are year-old lambs, known as yearlings, that were selected from the previous year's flock to become mothers. In January, they'll begin giving birth, and after a few months, ranchers will herd the baby lambs across a several-mile swath of grassland to feast on high mountain pastures. "You need good range to make good sheep," says Etcheverry, whose 12 herders move lambs across 500,000 acres. In August, those lambs will be herded back down the mountain and trucked to Colorado, where they'll finish their life on a diet of corn and grain.







## L A M B P A R T F O U R

# Making Sunday Supper

"I LOVE LAMB," SAYS CAMILLE LABRO. "If I had to pick, it would be my favorite meat. It's so velvety, so milky." Labro, a 38-year-old Parisian food writer who is compiling a cookbook of her mother's Provençal recipes, is pulling her wheeled shopping cart past the vendor stalls of the Marché Richard-Lenoir, just off the place de la Bastille in Paris. Her destination is Boucherie Bruno, the stall of a popular butcher who sells only at the market. She's buying ingredients for a favorite Sunday meal: a slow-roasted *gigot d'agneau*,

or leg of lamb, seasoned with herbs and garlic and served with stewed white beans. It's her family's rendition of the classic *gigot de sept heures*, or seven-hour lamb.

It's early in the morning still, but a long line has formed at Boucherie Bruno. Fortunately, Labro placed her order last week. "I learned long ago that if you don't reserve ahead, everything good just disappears," she says, as the butcher hands her a neatly wrapped parcel, which she opens before paying for the meat. Wrapped in the white paper is a plump, four-pound leg of baby lamb from which the butcher has thoughtfully removed the pelvic bone—to make it easier to slice—before tying the leg back together with kitchen twine. Labro smiles. It's perfect.

The French have a special fondness for lamb; they raise some of the best in the world, and chefs and home cooks transform it into a remarkable array of dishes. It's part of their culture, their heritage: the slow-cooked shanks served at bistros; the rib racks crusted with a paste of garlic and parsley, called a *persillade*, and roasted for special occasions; lamb loin chops skewered with a sprig of rosemary and rubbed with olive oil and herbs before being grilled over charcoal. Particularly in regions where sheep's milk is needed for the making of cheese, like Roquefort and Ossau-Iraty, lamb is produced and consumed in great quantities. The lamb Labro has bought comes from the Midi-Pyrénées region, which specializes in milk-fed Aveyron lamb, prized for its succulence.

Back in her apartment, a large, airy flat in the 11th arrondissement, Labro unloads the contents of her cart—herbs, garlic, the lamb, a baguette, a bottle of red wine from the southern Languedoc region—and arranges the ingredients on her kitchen table. She pulls an old

• A selection of signature lamb dishes from restaurants at [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE123](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE123)

wooden pepper grinder off a shelf and gives it a few turns, sending a coarsely ground mixture of peppercorns into the drawerlike receptacle

in the bottom of the grinder, which she sets aside. She rubs the lamb all over with olive oil; then she retrieves a *cocotte*, a heavy enameled Dutch oven, from a cupboard and sets it over a high flame. Finally, she sprinkles the lamb with the pepper and some coarse salt and nestles it into the *cocotte* to let it sear.

While the lamb browns, Labro breaks open a head of garlic and scatters the unpeeled cloves into an oiled glass casserole dish. Atop the garlic

cloves she builds a loose nest of fresh rosemary sprigs, bay leaves, and savory. "Everyone in Provence grows and loves savory," she says of the peppery herb. "When I taste it, I have a rush of memories from my garden." Once the lamb has browned all over, she removes it from the *cocotte* and places it on top of the herbs in the casserole dish. Next, she empties a leftover bottle of white wine from her refrigerator into the still-sizzling *cocotte*, freeing the caramelized bits from the bottom of the pot, before pouring the mixture of wine and meat juices over the lamb. Into the oven goes the meat, which will cook at 300 degrees or so for most of the afternoon. "In the end," she says, "the lamb should be *confit*: caramelized, sticky to the teeth, almost melting."

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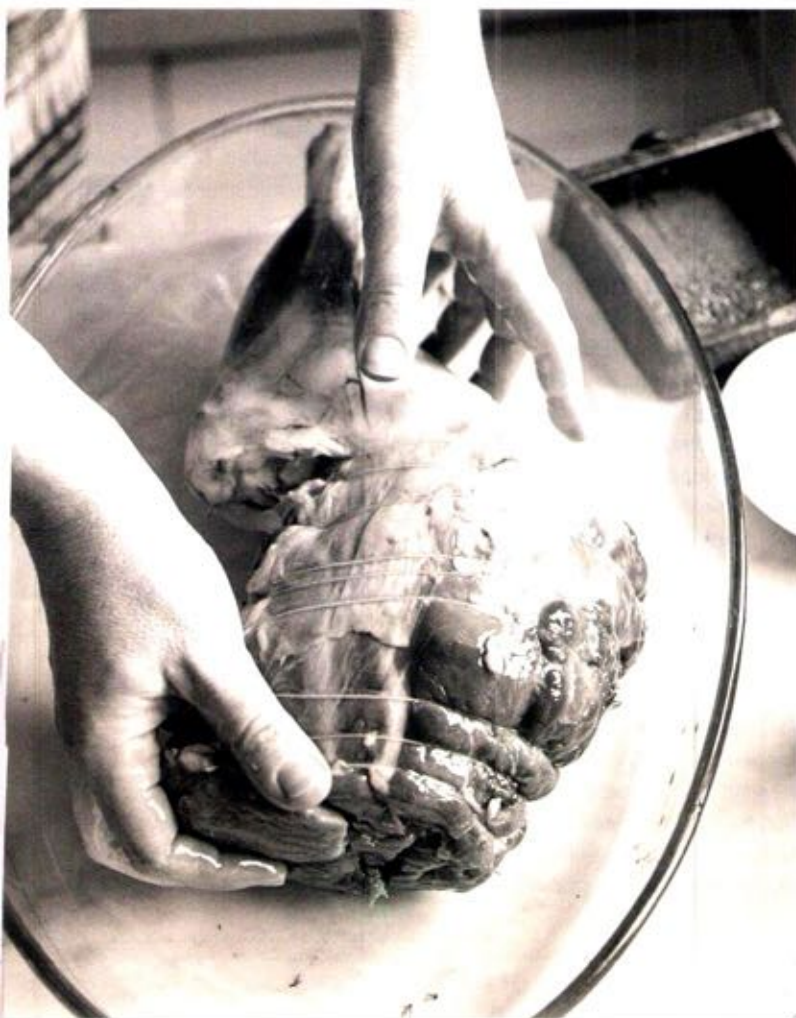
Now Labro turns to the beans—small white ones that go by the name coco de Paimpol—which have been soaking in a pot of water overnight. "These are from the Lorraine, like the ones my great-great-grandmother used to make," says Labro, as she sets the pot on the stove to simmer. To the beans she adds a clove-studded onion and a thick bundle of herbs: flat-leaf parsley, thyme, and bay leaves. Later, she'll mix the beans

with a purée of raw garlic and crème fraîche.

Early-afternoon sunlight streams into the kitchen, and the room is filled with a heady aroma of herbs, garlic, wine, and braising lamb. Labro opens the oven door and steals a forkful of tender lamb; it's juicy and rich and almost ready. Brushing a strand of hair from her face, she consults the crumpled piece of paper her mother's recipe is written on, to make sure she's got everything right. "It can be frustrating because my mother never uses measures or gives cooking times," she says. But with dishes this forgiving, those details hardly ever matter. —Todd Coleman

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Camille Labro shopping for ingredients at the Marché Richard-Lenoir in Paris; preparing the ingredients for the stewed beans (see page 66 for a recipe) that will accompany the lamb; serving the lamb; rubbing the leg of lamb with oil before roasting it.







## LAMB



## LAMB SALAD

SERVES 4-6

Roasted lamb top round, a tender and flavorful cut from the leg, is the centerpiece of this composed salad of earthy mushrooms, crisp potatoes, and a garlicky vinaigrette. Be sure to slice the meat against the grain after roasting for the juiciest results.

- 1 head garlic
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 2 tbsp. salt-packed capers, rinsed, drained, and finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. minced shallots
- 10 oil-packed anchovy filets, drained and finely chopped
- 12 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 1½-lb. lamb top round, trimmed
- 6 small red new potatoes (about ½ lb.), cut into wedges
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- ¼ lb. mushrooms, such as oyster or shiitake, stemmed and torn
- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh thyme
- 9 cups loosely packed mixed greens, such as frisée and arugula (about 5 oz.)
- ½ cup loosely packed mixed flat-leaf parsley and mint leaves
- 2 tbsp. chopped toasted pistachios

1 Heat oven to 400°. Cut ¼" off top of garlic head. Rub garlic with 1 tbsp. canola oil; wrap in foil and transfer to oven. Cook garlic until soft, about 1

hour; set aside to let cool. Squeeze the garlic cloves from their skin and finely chop them into a smooth paste; transfer garlic to a medium bowl along with the vinegar, capers, 1 tbsp. shallots, and anchovies. Slowly whisk in 8 tbsp. olive oil and season with salt and pepper; set vinaigrette aside.

2 Season the lamb generously all over with salt and pepper. Heat the remaining canola oil in a 10" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the lamb and cook until meat is browned on all sides, about 12 minutes. Transfer skillet to the oven and cook lamb until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the meat registers 130°, 10-15 minutes. Transfer the lamb to a plate, cover loosely with foil, and let rest for 30 minutes. (Lamb will continue cooking to medium rare as it rests.)

3 Increase the oven heat to 475°. In a medium bowl, toss the potatoes with 2 tbsp. of the olive oil and the rosemary; season with salt and pepper. Transfer the potatoes to a rimmed sheet pan and cook, flipping occasionally, until golden brown and tender, about 20 minutes. Set the potatoes aside.

4 Heat the remaining olive oil in an 8" skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and cook, flipping them once, until browned and crisp, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining shallots, butter, and thyme and cook, stirring frequently, until the flavors meld, about 1 minute more. Set mushrooms aside on a plate.

5 Put the mixed greens and the herbs into a large bowl. Whisk the vinaigrette and drizzle most of it over the greens. Toss the greens and season them with salt and pepper; transfer the greens to 4-6 plates and divide reserved potatoes and mushrooms between them. Thinly slice lamb against the grain and divide between the plates. Sprinkle remaining vinaigrette over salads and garnish with pistachios.



## GIGOT DE SEPT HEURES

(Seven-Hour Leg of Lamb)

SERVES 6-8

Slow-cooking a leg of lamb in wine with garlic and herbs transforms the meat into an ultratender entrée that goes marvelously with stewed white beans. This recipe is similar to one given to us by the French food writer Camille Labro, who got it from her Provençal mother (see page 64).

## FOR THE LAMB:

- 1 4-lb. shank end leg of lamb or a 4-lb. piece of shoulder, trimmed
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 750-ml bottle dry white wine
- 20 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 10 sprigs each fresh rosemary, thyme, and savory
- 5 fresh or dried bay leaves

## FOR THE BEANS:

- 2 cups dried white beans, preferably cannellini or white coco (see page 99), soaked overnight
- 5 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme and parsley and a bay leaf tied together with kitchen twine
- 10 whole cloves
- 1 large onion, halved
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. crème fraîche

1 Cook the lamb: Heat oven to 300°. Rub lamb with oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add lamb and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, about

12 minutes. Transfer lamb to a plate. Add wine and 2 cups water to the Dutch oven; scrape up browned bits from bottom of pot. Nestle garlic and herbs into a large oval casserole; place lamb on top of herbs; add pan juices from Dutch oven. Cover lamb with foil; transfer to oven and roast, basting frequently, for 3½ hours. Uncover, flip lamb, and continue to cook, basting frequently, until lamb is very tender, 3-3½ more hours. Transfer to a rack and let cool for 20 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, prepare the beans: About 1½ hours before the lamb is done, drain beans and transfer to a 4-qt. saucepan along with 6 cups water, 4 cloves garlic, and the herb bundle. Insert the cloves into the onion and add to the pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until beans are tender, about 1 hour. Remove pot from heat and season with salt and pepper. Discard herbs and strain beans, reserving cooking liquid. Transfer 2 cups beans, ¼ cup cooking liquid, oil, crème fraîche, and remaining garlic clove to a blender and purée. Stir puréed bean mixture and about 1 cup of the cooking liquid back into pot and cover to keep warm until lamb is cooked. Serve the lamb sliced or torn into chunks, alongside the beans.

**Pairing Note:** This rich Provençal dish calls for a wine with ripe tannins from the south of France, like the Domaine Leon Barral Faugères 2004 (\$33), from the Languedoc. —Ania Zawieja

KIBBEH SHIFTAH  
B'SHWANDAR

(Beet Stew with Lamb Meatballs)

SERVES 4-6

For this traditional Iraqi-Jewish dish,



## L A M B

ground-lamb meatballs are braised in a vibrant beet stew. *SAVEUR* test kitchen assistant Yael Coty learned to make this dish from her grandparents, who left Iraq for Israel in 1950.

## FOR THE MEATBALLS:

- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- ½ lb. ground lamb
- 2 tbsp. dried currants
- 1½ tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 tbsp. pine nuts
- ½ tsp. paprika
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## FOR THE RICE:

- 1½ cups basmati rice, soaked in water for 20 minutes
- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. turmeric

## FOR THE STEW:

- 6 small red beets (about 1 lb.), peeled and cut into sixths
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 5 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ tsp. ground coriander
- 1½ tsp. ground cumin
- 1½ tsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- ¾ tsp. paprika
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ⅛ tsp. cayenne
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 6 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 Make the meatballs: Heat oil in an 8" skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 7 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool slightly. Add onions to a medium bowl along with lamb, currants, parsley, pine nuts, paprika, and egg and com-

bine with your hands. Divide mixture into 12 portions; dip your hands in a bowl of water and roll portions into 1½" meatballs and transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cover meatballs with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2 Prepare the rice: Strain rice and transfer to a 2-qt. saucepan along with the salt, turmeric, and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Remove pot from heat and keep covered in a warm place.

3 Meanwhile, make the stew: Bring beets and 6 cups water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until beets are tender, about 30 minutes. Remove pot from heat and, using a slotted spoon, transfer beets to a bowl; reserve beet juice.

4 Put garlic on a work surface and sprinkle with a little salt; finely chop. Scrape the garlic into a paste with the side of the chef's knife. In a small bowl, combine garlic paste, 3 tbsp. oil, coriander, cumin, curry powder, turmeric, paprika, ginger, and cayenne; set spice paste aside. Heat remaining olive oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 7 minutes. Add reserved spice paste and tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of the reserved beet juice. Add remaining beet juice, lemon juice, and sugar; simmer for 5 minutes. Using a spoon, place reserved meatballs in the simmering stew. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until meatballs are cooked through, about 8 minutes. Skim surface of stew, add reserved beets, and cook for 2 more minutes. To serve, fluff rice with a fork and spoon it into serving bowls along with ladlefuls of the stew and meatballs; season and garnish with parsley.

**Pairing Note:** The earthy 2006 Marqués de Cáceres grenache rosé 2006

(\$9) from Rioja has refreshing spicy notes and pairs well with this earthy dish. —A.Z.



## LAMB CHOPS WITH MINT SALSA VERDE

SERVES 2

Salsa verde, a Mediterranean condiment flavored with anchovies, capers, and herbs, partners nicely with seared, medium-rare lamb chops.

- 4 1"-thick lamb loin chops (about 1 lb.) or frenched lamb rib chops
- 2 tbsp. plus ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups loosely packed fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- ½ cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh tarragon leaves
- 1 tbsp. salt-packed capers, soaked, rinsed, drained, and finely chopped
- ¼ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 6 oil-packed anchovy filets, drained and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 Put lamb into a small baking dish, rub with 2 tbsp. oil, and season with salt and pepper; set aside to let rest for 30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, make the salsa verde: Combine mint, parsley, tarragon, capers, chile flakes, anchovies, and garlic in a medium bowl. Slowly drizzle in remaining oil while stirring with a fork to make the salsa verde; set aside.

3 Build a medium-hot fire in a char-

## RUBS AND MARINADES

Lamb goes well with all sorts of distinctively flavored rubs and marinades. The quantities shown below are for cuts large enough to feed four; scale quantities up or down as necessary so that you have enough rub or marinade to cover the meat. Once marinated, the cuts mentioned in the following recipes can be grilled, broiled, or roasted. —Hunter Lewis

## Chile Rub

This recipe is based on one given to us by *SAVEUR* contributing editor Rick Bayless. Stem and seed 12 dried guajillo chiles (or substitute 8 ancho chiles) and put them into a bowl; cover with boiling water to let soften for 30 minutes. Drain and transfer to blender along with 5 cloves garlic, 3 tbsp. water, 3 tbsp. cider vinegar, 2 tsp. sugar, 1 tsp. kosher salt, ¼ tsp. black pepper, ¼ tsp. ground cumin, and ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon. Purée until smooth. Rub mixture over a 3-lb. piece of shoulder or leg. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Makes 1¼ cups.

## Lemon-Dill Marinade

Fresh herbs marry beautifully with lamb. In a small bowl, whisk together 1 cup dry red wine, ¾ cup olive oil, 1 cup roughly chopped fresh dill fronds, ½ cup fresh lemon juice, 3 tbsp. fresh oregano leaves, 1 tbsp. kosher salt, and 1 tbsp. dried mustard. Rub marinade onto two 1-lb. sirloin chops and let marinate for up to 4 hours in the refrigerator. Makes 2 cups.

## Soy-Honey Marinade

This delicious marinade brings out lamb's natural sweetness. In a bowl, whisk together ½ cup soy sauce, ⅓ cup honey, ¼ cup fresh lime juice, 3 tbsp. Asian sesame oil, 3 tbsp. minced ginger, 6 pods star anise, 2 stemmed and chopped chiles de árbol, and 2 minced garlic cloves. Rub marinade onto two 1-lb. arm or blade chops and let marinate for 1 hour at room temperature or overnight in the refrigerator. Makes ½ cup.



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coal grill or set gas grill to medium-high heat. (Alternatively, heat a cast-iron grill pan over medium-high heat.) Add loin chops and cook, flipping once, until browned and crusty and cooked to desired temperature, 6–8 minutes for medium rare if using loin chops (rib chops will take only 4 minutes or so to reach medium rare). Transfer lamb to a platter. Stir sauce and drizzle over chops, reserving some of the sauce to serve on the side.

**Pairing Note:** A high-acid, ultra-crisp white, such as a txakolina from Spain's Basque Country, matches the briny notes of the salsa verde; try the 2004 txakolina from Uriondo (\$16.99), which has pleasing aromas of lemon and stone fruit. —A.Z.



## MOUSSAKA

SERVES 12

This traditional Greek casserole featuring spiced ground lamb and eggplant is based on a version made by Jim Botsacos, the chef-partner of the Greek restaurant Molyvos in New York City.

- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained
- 1/4 cup dried currants
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. ground lamb
- 1 tsp. cayenne
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. ground allspice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, cored, and finely chopped
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 1/2 cups canola oil

- 1 1/2 lbs. eggplant, cut crosswise into 1/4"-thick slices
- 1 large russet potato (about 1 lb.), cut crosswise into 1/4"-thick slices
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup flour
- 2 1/4 cups milk
- 1 bay leaf
- Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup grated Parmesan

1 Purée the tomatoes in a blender and set aside. Put currants into a small bowl and cover with boiling water; let soften for 30 minutes. Drain currants and set aside. Heat 1 tbsp. olive oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add the lamb, cayenne, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and salt and pepper and cook, stirring to break up the meat, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer lamb to a large strainer set over a bowl and drain; discard any liquid left in the pot. Return pot to the heat and add the remaining olive oil along with the garlic, onions, and bell pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add the wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost evaporated, 10–15 minutes. Add the reserved tomatoes, currants, and lamb and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened, about 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and set meat sauce aside.

2 Heat the canola oil in 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add the eggplant slices and fry, turning occasionally, until tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer eggplant slices to paper towels. Working in batches, add the potatoes and cook until tender, about 5 minutes, and transfer to paper towels.

3 Make a béchamel sauce: Melt butter in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and cook, whisking constantly, until pale and smooth, 2 minutes. Whisking constantly, add the milk in a steady stream until incor-

porated; add the bay leaf and cook, whisking often, until reduced to 2 cups, about 15 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg and discard the bay leaf. Let sauce cool for 5 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together the yogurt and egg yolks and whisk into sauce until smooth.

4 Heat oven to 400°. Place the reserved potato slices in the bottom of an oval 3-qt. baking dish (or two 1 1/2-qt. baking dishes) and season with salt and pepper. Put the eggplant slices on top, season with salt and pepper, and then cover with the meat sauce. Pour the béchamel over the top of the meat sauce and spread evenly with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle Parmesan evenly over the top and bake until browned and bubbly, 45–50 minutes. Let cool for at least 20 minutes before serving.



## RACK OF LAMB WITH ROSEMARY AND THYME

SERVES 2

The classic presentation for a roast rack of lamb calls for frenching the meat: removing the layer of muscle and fat that extends to the end of the rib bones. For step-by-step instructions on how to do this, see page 94.

- 1 1 3/4-lb. frenched rack of lamb
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme, plus 4 sprigs
- 10 cloves garlic, smashed

Heat oven to 450°. Season lamb with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat.

Add lamb fat side down and cook, using tongs to flip and sear the bottom and sides of the rack, until browned, about 10 minutes. Turn lamb fat side up in the skillet and scatter herbs over the top. Add garlic to skillet and transfer to oven. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center of the meat reads 130° for medium rare, about 10 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes before slicing into chops and serving.

**Pairing Note:** An elegant rack of lamb calls for a rich red bordeaux. The 2005 Château Haut Mayne (\$17.99), from Graves, shows lovely notes of earth, blackberries, and spice. —A.Z.



## LAMB NAVARIN

SERVES 4

We based our version of this French lamb stew on a recipe used in courses at the French Culinary Institute in New York City. It calls for *tourne*-ing the vegetables: using a knife to transform them into elegant, tapered shapes. For a step-by-step guide, go to [SAVEUR.COM/123](http://SAVEUR.COM/123).

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 1/2 lbs. trimmed lamb shoulder, cut into 1" cubes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 5 medium carrots (1 chopped, 4 peeled and cut into 2" pieces)
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- 4 medium turnips, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- 4 medium new potatoes, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tsp. sugar



## L A M B

**12** pearl onions, peeled  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup fresh or frozen peas  
 Finely chopped flat-leaf  
 parsley, for garnish

**1** Heat oven to 350°. Heat oil in a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season lamb with salt and pepper. Working in batches, add lamb and cook, turning once, until browned, 8–10 minutes. Transfer lamb to a plate; set aside. Add the chopped carrot and yellow onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft and brown, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, flour, and tomato paste and cook, stirring often, until tomato paste begins to brown, about 2 minutes. Stir in 6 cups water and reserved lamb. Cover, bring to a boil, and transfer to oven; cook until lamb is tender, about 50 minutes.

**2** Using a slotted spoon, transfer lamb to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm. Set a sieve over a 4-qt. saucepan and strain cooking liquid. Discard solids. Bring liquid to a boil over medium-high heat, skimming surface occasionally; cook until reduced to 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups, about 25 minutes. Set liquid aside.

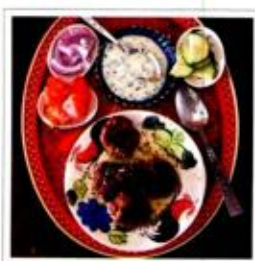
**3** Meanwhile, using a paring knife, trim each piece of remaining carrots, as well as the turnips and potatoes, into elegantly tapered football shapes (see [SAVEUR.COM/123](http://SAVEUR.COM/123); alternatively, cut them into a large dice). Set potatoes aside in a bowl of water. Heat a 12" skillet over medium-high heat and add carrots, butter, sugar, salt, and 1 cup water. Partially cover and cook for 10 minutes. Add turnips and pearl onions, partially cover, and continue cooking until liquid has evaporated and vegetables are tender, about 10 more minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, swirling skillet, until vegetables are golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add 2 tbsp. water, swirl skillet to glaze vegetables, and remove from heat; set aside and keep warm.

**4** Bring a 4-qt. saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the reserved pota-

toes, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to a bowl; set aside.

**5** To serve, put the lamb, carrots, turnips, pearl onions, potatoes, and peas into the sauce and cook until hot, about 2 minutes. Divide the stew between bowls. Garnish with parsley.

**Pairing Note:** The Palmina Nebbiolo 2004 (\$40) from California has soft tannins that pair well with the sweet vegetables in this stew. —A.Z.



## MERGUEZ

(Spiced Lamb Sausages)

SERVES 4

Chilling the meat before chopping it is the best way to achieve the semi-coarse texture that is a signature of these North African-style sausages. This version is made without casings.

- 1** lb. trimmed lamb shoulder, cut into 1" cubes, or 1 lb. ground lamb
- 3** cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1** tbsp. harissa (see page 99)
- 1** tbsp. minced flat-leaf parsley
- 1** tsp. paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground coriander
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. ground fennel seed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4** tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup yogurt
- 8** leaves basil, roughly chopped
- Chopped tomatoes, red onions, and cucumbers, for serving
- Flat bread, for serving

**1** Put lamb into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the chopping

blade and transfer to freezer to let chill for 30 minutes. Add 2 cloves garlic, harissa, parsley, paprika, coriander, cumin, fennel, salt, and pepper to the bowl; process until lamb is coarsely chopped and mixed with spices, about 15 seconds. (If using ground lamb, just mix lamb with other ingredients in a large bowl.) Divide lamb mixture into 8 portions and form the portions into 3"-wide patties. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet

over medium-high heat. Add lamb patties and cook, turning once until browned and still slightly pink, about 6–8 minutes. Transfer merguez to paper towels; set aside.

**2** Meanwhile, stir together remaining garlic and oil, yogurt, and basil in a small bowl to make a sauce; season with salt and pepper. Serve merguez on a platter with sauce, chopped vegetables, and flat bread.

## FOUR CLASSIC SAUCES

Lamb's distinctive flavor takes well to a remarkable variety of sauces, from sweet fruit chutneys to salty tapenades. Here are four sauces to accompany a range of cuts and cooking styles. For the best flavor and presentation, the sauces described below should be served at room temperature and should be stirred again just before serving. —Hunter Lewis

## Potato Skordalia

There are many versions of skordalia, a thick, garlicky Greek sauce; this one makes an excellent accompaniment to grilled lamb. Put 1 peeled russet potato cut into 1" pieces into a 2-qt. pot of salted water and bring to a boil. Cook until tender, about 15 minutes; drain and transfer to a large bowl. Mash potatoes until smooth. Smash 8–10 peeled garlic cloves, sprinkle them with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. kosher salt, and make a paste by finely chopping garlic and repeatedly scraping it against work surface. Add garlic paste to potatoes and vigorously whisk in 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup ground blanched almonds, and 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Serve immediately or refrigerate overnight. Makes about 2 cups.

## Pistou

This aromatic sauce of basil, Parmesan, and garlic is often served with sliced roast lamb in southern France. Into a food processor put  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cups loosely packed basil leaves,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan, 3 tbsp. extra-vir-

gin olive oil, 3 roughly chopped garlic cloves, and 3 tbsp. pine nuts. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Pulse until finely chopped; add 3 tbsp. more oil and process until sauce thickens and comes together. Makes about 1 cup.

## Apricot Chutney

This savory-sweet English-style chutney goes well with lamb roasts or braised lamb shanks. Heat 3 tbsp. canola oil and 1 tsp. curry powder in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until curry powder is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add 1 minced small onion, 1 minced garlic clove, and one 1" piece peeled minced ginger and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped dried apricots and  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup raisins along with 1 cup water, 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice, and 2 tbsp. sugar. Cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 20 minutes. Makes 2 cups.

## Tapenade

This briny and bold-tasting Mediterranean sauce is ideal for roast lamb. Into a food processor put  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pitted dry-cured black olives, 6 drained oil-packed anchovy filets, 2 roughly chopped garlic cloves, 3 tbsp. sliced almonds,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup rinsed salted capers, and 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil. Purée ingredients; add 6 more tbsp. oil a little at a time. Season sauce with 1 tbsp. fresh lemon or orange juice and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Refrigerate overnight before serving. Makes about 1 cup.



SAVOR

# Dinner in t

Residents of a Tuscan village come to

BY BETH ELON PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANDON NORDEMAN

TODD COLEMAN