

March into springtime with delicious lamb

March may come in like a lion, but it sure goes out like a lamb! Since lamb is a traditional spring favorite (Easter and Passover are just around the corner), I thought it the perfect opportunity to share some of our most popular lamb recipes with you.

I remember my mother's lamb chops... there was nothing like them, that is, until I tried Lamb Chops Diablo. The spicy sauce, with just a hint of sweetness, turns ordinary lamb chops into a special dinner.

You don't have to be a leprechaun to enjoy a little Irish Stew. A savory mixture of carrots, potatoes, and onions add to lamb's flavor creating a perfect meal for a St. Patrick's Day celebration or a simple Sunday supper. Prepare it in the morning and let it simmer all day.

And what could be easier and more fun than quick gyro? They're perfect for a serving dinner or a casual party treat. Prepared in about 10 minutes, they can be prepared the

night before and served hot or cold the next day.

Be sure lamb is trimmed of fat. Measure your portions and accompany with healthy vegetables, pasta or rice, and fresh fruit. Listen to the rave reviews!

LAMB CHOPS DIABLO

(2 servings)

1 garlic clove, chopped
dash each salt and pepper
1/4 teaspoon oregano leaves
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon each Dijon-style mustard and honey
12 ounces lamb loin or shoulder chops (1/2 to 3/4 inch thick)
2 tablespoons plain dried bread crumbs

Using a mortar and pestle, combine garlic, salt and pepper, mashing to form a smooth paste; add oregano leaves, mashing to combine. Add lemon juice, mustard and honey and stir until mixture is smooth and well combined.

Arrange lamb chops on rack in broiling pan and brush 1 side with



Lite success

Florine Mark

half of the garlic mixture; broil 2 inches from heat source for 3 minutes. Turn chops over; brush with remaining garlic mixture and broil until chops are medium-rare, about 3 minutes longer. Sprinkle chops with bread crumbs and broil until crumbs are lightly browned, about 30 seconds.

Each serving provides: 4 protein, 40 optional calories.

Source: Weight Watchers Favorite Recipes, 1986

IRISH STEW

(4 servings)

1 1/2 pounds lamb for stew (1-inch cubes)

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons water, divided
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
6 unpeeled potatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 cup each sliced carrots (1/2-inch thick slices) and onions (1/2-inch wedges)
1/4 teaspoon thyme leaves
2 teaspoons all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
On rack in broiling pan broil lamb, turning once, until rare. In 3-quart saucepan combine lamb, 2 cups water, and the salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and let simmer for 1 1/2 hours. Add potatoes,

carrots, onions and thyme; cover and let simmer until vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes longer. Combine remaining 2 tablespoons water with the flour and stir to dissolve; add to stew and cook, stirring constantly, until liquid is thickened. Serve sprinkled with parsley.

Each serving provides: 4 protein, 1/2 bread, 1 vegetable, and 5 optional calories.

Source: Weight Watchers International Cookbook, 1985

GYROS

(2 servings)

1/4 cup minced onion
1 small garlic clove, minced
1/2 pound ground lamb
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon each oregano leaves and ground cumin
1/2 cup seeded pared cucumber, diced
1/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
2 pitas (2 ounces each)

To serve, use a sharp knife, cut 1/2 of the way around edge of each pita, open to form pocket. Fill each pita with half of the lettuce and tomato, 1 lamb patty, and half of the yogurt mixture.

Each serving provides: 3 protein, 2 bread, 1/4 vegetable, 4 milk. Source: Weight Watchers Minutes Cookbook, 1989

Add a dash of spice to make meals special

Cooking with spices makes meals "something special." There is hardly a food made that can't be made better by adding a dash of spice. Use spices in small quantities until you get to know their flavors.

ONE DISH. Well seasoned, can "make the meal." Don't use the same spice in several dishes at the same meal and don't serve heavily spiced foods in every course. The supermarket shelves are filled with dozens of spices and spice blends to tantalize your taste buds, but remember to start out with a "dash," you want to enhance the food, not disguise it.

Curry powder is a blend of coriander, turmeric, cloves, black pepper,

red pepper, garlic, cumin, fenugreek, ginger and cardamom. Many of the varieties of spices. Curry is considered exotic, an inspiration to Indian cooking.

For a mild flavor, use one teaspoon curry for each four servings. The chief use, of course, is making meat, fish and chicken curries. It is also good with rice, veal, shrimp, eggs, vegetables, seasoned sauces, soups and stews. Try a dash in mayonnaise, French dressing or in a can of mushroom or tomato soup.

CARDAMOM IS one of the most aromatic and pungent on the spice shelf. It is the dried fruit of a plant in the ginger family and native to India. Cardamom pods are packed in

jars or plastic bags or sold in bulk.

To use the whole cardamom pods, gently crush and remove seeds. The whole seed can be added to dishes or grind in a pepper mill or clean coffee grinder. Custards, rice puddings, cookies, breads and fruits get a "nippy" new flavor from cardamom. Try a dash in green pea soup, sweet potatoes or sprinkled on pork or beef roast. A real taste treat is dropping a cardamom seed into a cup of strong black coffee.

Mace is a cousin of nutmeg. In fact, mace is the lacy covering around the nutmeg seed. The two do have similar aromas but mace is more pungent and less sweet. Mace adds this pungent flavor to sweet breads, pound cake, cherry pie and



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puddings. Mace is probably at its best with chocolate, in cakes, puddings and other desserts.

GREAT COOKS also add mace to oyster stew, creamed eggs or Welsh rabbit, fish sauces and meat stuffings. Adding a sprinkle of mace on whipping cream gives it more flavor.

Cumin is the secret ingredient in

exotic oriental flavorings. However, it is probably most familiar in chili con carne and hot tamales. Cumin has a distinctive aroma and flavor, spicy and sharp with a slightly bitter taste so start with a dash. It can also be used in seasoning soups and stews, flavoring bread or rice and a peppery addition to meat loaf.

Coriander seed was one of the first spices used by man but is actually the dried ripe fruit of an herb in the parsley family. To many it tastes like a combination of lemon peel and sage, and has mild, fragrant odor. It is used commercially in many meat products especially hot dogs.

In the ground form it is added to curry blends, rolls, pastries, cookies and cakes or sprinkled in applesauce or gingerbread.

Fennel is an aromatic seed that has a pleasant odor and sweet taste somewhat like anise. The flavor of fennel blends well in baking for rolls, breads and pastries, and seasons fruits, soup, fish dishes and sauces. Sprinkle on pizza topping, apple pie filling or on pork before roasting. Actually, fennel is an ancient herb that was thought to be sacred and

could counteract causes of some diseases.

Paprika is bright red in color yet mild in flavor and garnishes pale foods such as potatoes, cream sauces for vegetables and lemon butter sauces for fish. It is widely used in sausages, salad dressings and condiments. In Hungarian cooking of course paprika is used very liberally.

White pepper is more aromatic but less biting than black pepper. It is used basically the same as black pepper but preferred where black specks might mar the appearance of soups, sauces and fish.

Cayenne pepper is made from capsaicinum hot peppers and the most pungent of all spices with a fiery bite. Experiment cautiously with very little as it adds a real tang to most dishes. Red pepper is another spice to "proceed with caution" when using for spicing up dishes, as it is hot and biting.

All these spices maintain flavor and intensity if kept in a cool dry dark place. Keep spices away from heat so do not store over the stove. Spices will stay fresh in tightly sealed packages for several months but they don't improve with long aging.

If you're not sure if the spice is "fresh," rub a bit of the spice between your palms and breathe the aroma. No aroma, then it's time to replace your spice.

Spice up your foods, but remember a pinch goes a long way!

Shamrock dessert low in fat, calories

AP — Top off your St. Patrick's Day celebration with a layered dessert that's flavored with chocolate and cool mint. Shamrock Parfaits are made with cocoa, evaporated skim milk and frozen light whipped topping. They're low in fat and calories and cholesterol-free.

1 1/4 cups evaporated skim milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups frozen light whipped topping, thawed
1/4 teaspoon mint extract
6 to 7 drops green food color

In a medium saucepan, sprinkle gelatin over water; let stand 2 minutes to soften. Over low heat, stir constantly until gelatin is completely dissolved, about 3 minutes. In a small bowl, stir together sugar and

cocoa; gradually add to gelatin mixture, stirring with a wire whisk until well blended. Continue to cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat.

Stir in evaporated milk and vanilla. Pour mixture into a large bowl; refrigerate, stirring occasionally, until mixture mounds slightly when dropped from a spoon. Fold in 1/4 cup of the whipped topping. Divide about half the mixture among 8 parfait glasses.

Stir extract and food color into the remaining 1 1/4 cups topping; divide about three-fourths topping among parfaits. Spoon remaining chocolate mixture over topping in each glass. Garnish with remaining topping. Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 160 cal., 5 g pro., 25 g carbs., 5 g fat, 0 mg chol., 50 mg sodium, 125 mg calcium.
Recipe from: Hershey's Cocoa.

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