

Fruit, lamb make special holiday meal

Leg of lamb is probably the most popular choice of meats for spring holiday meals due to its place in the history of the spring religious holidays. The recipes for this delicious meat quite often indicate the region of the world where they originated. Middle Eastern influence often is found in the use of honey, dried fruits and spices such as coriander, saffron, cinnamon and cloves.

The Persians taught us the delicious flavors achieved with the combination of acid ingredients with the mild taste of lamb. Fruit and nuts often typified the sauces and ingredients of this region.

As you know, we have continued to combine these flavors with raisin sauces, clove-studded meats and currently, we now utilizing simple thickened sauces with fresh fruits. The sauces are quite simple to prepare and take very little time. Often today's cooks are unsure of fixing a leg of lamb and think it is beyond their range of cooking skills. Nothing could be further from the truth and roasting meats, unattended, are gaining in popularity once again.

The American Lamb Council recommends the most delicious holiday meal that you have ever fixed for your guests. Select American lamb, since USDA inspection guarantees that the product you are buying is "lamb." To make sure that you have enough for all your guests, buy 1 1/2 to 2 pounds of boneless lamb roast per person or 1/2 pound of bone-in lamb per person.

The leg of lamb, boneless or bone-in, is an ideal choice for your spring holiday meal. Purists will choose the bone-in leg of lamb, since they enjoy the flavors which they feel are enhanced by the roasting of the bone but many people choose the boneless because there is less waste and is easy to carve.

Remember these basics: cook at 325 degrees in a preheated oven for 20-30 minutes per pound depending on the size and cut. Remove the roast the light-colored, let stand 15-20 minutes and then slice. Final temperature should be 145-165 degrees for medium-rare and medium is 160 degrees.

Remember that glazes or marinades with sweet ingredients will brown quickly so follow the directions for cooking them closely. Also, discard any marinade or glaze that has been used with the meat unless you bring it to a complete boil.

It is better to set aside part of the glaze to use as an extra sauce to avoid contact with the raw meat. Here is a recipe from the American Lamb Council.

Canned goods won't last forever

"If canned foods are stored properly they can last a good long time," said Sylvia Treiman, home economist for the Michigan State University Extension Service of Oakland County Food and Nutrition Hotline.

"However, canned goods don't keep forever," she added.

"Canned goods need to follow the first in, first out rule. It is a good idea to write the date of purchase on each canned good, then use up the old ones first, of course. The hotline has been receiving many questions about storage of canned goods lately. High temperatures more than 100 degrees are harmful to canned goods. Also, canned foods that have been frozen by accident can also be risky. Never use canned goods from containers that are bulging, leaky, dented or cracked.

Some tips:

- Store canned goods in a cool, clean, dry place.
- Keep canned goods away from furnaces, stoves or very hot areas.
- In cold climates, keep canned foods out of unheated areas such as garages, campers, or porches to prevent freezing.
- Never even taste or open a canned food you suspect is spoiled.
- Carefully dispose of any canned food that spurts upon opening or has a foul odor.
- Disinfect entire area affected with a bleach solution.
- Keep away from animals and children.



Lamb is special: Lamb can be glazed with a variety of items, including citrus and honey. Lamb can be a traditional feast for the spring holidays.

HONEY CITRUS LEG OF LAMB

- 1 leg of American Lamb, bone-in (5-7 pounds)
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 small orange, sliced and seeded
- 1 lemon, sliced and seeded
- 1/4 cup raisins or dry cherries
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

For glaze, combine cornstarch, cinnamon and nutmeg in 2-quart saucepan. Stir in honey and water until cornstarch dissolves. Add orange and lemon slices and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer 5-10 minutes or until thickened; stir occasionally. Remove and discard orange and lemon slices; remove 3/4 cup glaze and stir in raisins and walnuts. Set aside.

Place leg of lamb, meaty side down, on rack in roasting pan. Roast at 325 degrees F. 20-25 minutes per pound, or to internal temperature of 140 degrees F. for medium-rare, 25-30 minutes per pound, or to internal temperature of 160 degrees F. for medium.

Brush leg with remaining 1/2 cup glaze during the final 30 minutes of cooking. Remove from oven, cover and let stand 15-20 minutes. Internal temperature will rise approximately 10 degrees. Slice and serve with glaze you have set aside. Serves 10-12.

Nutritional information per serving: Calories 295, Total fat 10 g, Cholesterol 95 mg, Sodium 74 mg.

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Veterinarian

CAT-CHOOOO! (WATCHING OUT FOR CAT SNEEZES)

Like people, cats sneeze for all kinds of reasons. Some may be harmless reasons, like dust in the nose. If sneezing is accompanied by other symptoms, however, the cat owner should beware. Cats are susceptible to several serious diseases of the upper respiratory tract which can be fatal if not treated early. Cats do get asthma. Asthma is a hypersensitivity reaction to allergens like pollens and molds. Also, there are viral diseases that we try to prevent with vaccines. One of the more common viral infections is rhinotracheitis. With this disease, sneezing may occur along with labored breathing, refusal to eat, dehydration, and discharge from the eyes and nose. Those symptoms may also be present if the cat has contracted the calicivirus, which is characterized by high

fever and visible ulceration on the cat's tongue as well.

If the sneezing persists for several hours a veterinarian should be seen as soon as possible. Treatment can include antibiotics, eye ointments, and the use of a humidifier. We have a full veterinary facility at THE CAT PRACTICE, 875 South Worth. We cater to cats only and have smaller examination and surgery tables, as well as a waiting room with cat toys and literature to make the area comfortable for our patients and their families. Stop by or call 540-3350 to arrange a convenient time for an appointment.

HINT: Cats have good chance of surviving most upper respiratory diseases - IF they get professional care quickly.

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