

ITALIAN-STYLE BRAISED LEG OF LAMB 10-12 servings

I include here directions for cooking and serving today or making ahead, cooling, slicing, and warming to serve the next day. I like the made-ahead version best, though the lamb will then be cooked to medium-well even though I adore medium-rare lamb. If you serve the lamb the day it is cooked, you should have a medium (pink) or medium-rare (pink to light red) leg of lamb with some browner edges for those who like their meat more well-done. I include specific directions below along with a temperature chart for lamb.

- 5-6 pounds boneless, tied leg of lamb
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 garlic heads, halved crosswise
- 6 oil-packed anchovy fillets--these will dissolve in the sauce

- 3 rosemary sprigs
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 28-ounce can chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup pitted and halved kalamata olives--added later
- 1/4 cup capers, drained and rinsed--added later
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar--added later

ONE HOUR BEFORE COOKING: Let lamb rest at room temperature for an hour or so before cooking to ensure an evenly cooked piece of meat.

20 MINUTES BEFORE COOKING: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place oven rack at center of oven.

SEASON/BROWN THE LAMB/ADD SAUCE INGREDIENTS: While oven heats, remove lamb from packaging and pat dry with paper towels. Season lamb, patting or rubbing in the salt and pepper. Heat oil in large dutch oven or roasting pan over medium-high heat. Add lamb and brown well, turning occasionally to make sure all sides are brown—about 20 minutes. While last side browns, add onion, garlic, anchovies, and rosemary. Add wine and tomatoes; bring to a boil. Remove from heat.

ROAST LAMB + SAUCE IN OVEN/CHECK TEMPERATURE: Cover tightly with dutch oven lid or heavy-duty aluminum foil. Roast in the oven for an hour or so; remove and check the temperature of the lamb with an instant-read thermometer.

If the temperature is **110-115 degrees F**, stir in the olives, capers, and red wine vinegar, squeeze out the cloves of garlic into the sauce, and return lamb with sauce to the oven for another few minutes until the temperature hits 120 degrees F. Let rest 10-15 minutes, slice, return meat to pan and stir a bit to make sure all of the meat is covered with sauce over all.

If the temperature is already **120 degrees F** after the first check, remove meat to a rack. Add olives, capers, and red wine vinegar to the sauce and simmer on the stove top, first squeezing out cloves of garlic into the sauce. Let meat rest 10 minutes, slice, and return to pan, stirring to make sure meat is covered with sauce over all. Remove rosemary sprigs; the leaves will have disappeared into the sauce.

SERVE TODAY HOT OR WARM: Arrange meat on a platter and spoon sauce on top. Serve hot or warm. If it becomes cool or even cold, it's still totally delicious.

The temperature of the lamb will rise at least 10 degrees during a 15 minute rest, so that 120 degrees, quite rare, becomes 130 degrees, medium-rare with a few done slices at the end. See temperature chart below.

MAKE AHEAD AND SERVE TOMORROW: Follow directions above, cooking meat to no higher temperature than 115 degrees F and finish sauce by adding the olives, capers, red wine vinegar, and squeezing out the garlic cloves. Let meat cool completely in sauce at room temperature. Cover tightly and refrigerate up to one day. Slice meat thinly. Return sliced meat to pan and spoon sauce over, stirring in a little water if the sauce is really thick. Reheat covered in a preheated 350 F oven until hot and bubbly—30-40 minutes. Arrange on a platter, spooning sauce over all. The meat will be cooked medium to medium-well, but will be very tender and flavorful. If you'd like a rarer piece of meat the second day, do not re-heat it in the oven, but instead slice, arrange on a platter, and serve it cold with a separately warmed sauce.

Based on a recipe by ANNA THEOKTISTO in REAL SIMPLE magazine.

Lamb Roast Internal Cooking Temperatures:

- **Rare:** 120 to 125 degrees F – center is bright red, pinkish toward the exterior portion
- **Medium Rare:** 130 to 135 degrees F – center is very pink, slightly brown toward the exterior

portion

- **Medium:** 140 to 145 degrees F – center is light pink, outer portion is brown
- **Medium Well:** 150 to 155 degrees F – not pink
- **Well Done:** 160 degrees F and above – meat is uniformly brown throughout

*Lamb temp information courtesy What's Cooking America. Link includes detailed information for **roasting**boneless leg of lamb*

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