



Roast Leg of Lamb

SERVES 6 TO 8

Fakhd Ghannem (fakh-eid ghun-num)

The aroma of herbs and spices that fills the air while this marinated leg of lamb is roasting will entice you to take a bite before it's done. A favorite around the holidays, this makes an excellent centerpiece for any occasion.

Special equipment: A roasting pan and rack, a basting brush, and kitchen twine.

Prepare ahead: You can marinate the leg of lamb 1 day in advance. The leg can be roasted 4 to 5 hours in advance; however, it is best right out of the oven. Serve as directed.

FOR THE LAMB

4 tablespoons finely minced garlic
 ¾ cup finely minced yellow onion
 ¼ cup yogurt
 1 teaspoon lemon zest

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
 ¼ cup ketchup
 ½ teaspoon table-grind black pepper
 ½ teaspoon ground allspice
 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 (4–4½-pound) boneless leg of lamb
 1 teaspoon and 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
 Kitchen twine
 2 cups boiling water



To prepare the leg of lamb

In a bowl, combine the first 11 ingredients for the marinade. Mix well. Add the leg of lamb and rub the marinade all over the lamb. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight.

Remove the leg from the refrigerator and let it stand for about ½ hour to allow it to come to room temperature. Add 1 teaspoon of salt, rubbing it evenly over the leg.

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Shape the lamb into a cylinder (fatty side facing up) while tucking any loose pieces in and under the roast. Try to keep the roast uniform in size from one end to the other so it will bake evenly. Use individual pieces of twine to tie around the roast at 2-inch intervals (see “Tying a Roast,” page xv). Tighten the twine just enough so it presses firmly against the meat but is not cutting into it.

Place the leg on the rack (fatty side facing up) in the roasting pan. Pour any remaining marinade over the leg and sprinkle the top surface of the meat with

1 teaspoon salt. Add the boiling water to the roasting pan. Tent loosely with foil and place the roast in the center of the oven for 30 minutes. Then remove the pan from the oven and reduce the heat to 300°F. Baste the leg before returning it, again loosely tented with foil, to the oven, for 1 hour more.

After one hour, remove the foil tent, increase the oven temperature to 400°F, and baste the leg of lamb again, then return it to the oven for 10 to 15 minutes to brown.

Remove the pan from the oven and let the roast rest for 10 to 15 minutes before carving, allowing the juices to redistribute. (The leg should be medium-rare at this stage; bake longer for medium to well done.) Strain the sauce.

To serve

Transfer the roast to a shallow serving platter and carve into slices. Surround the roast with fresh sprigs of mint and sliced tomato wedges. Offer the sauce in a dish on the side. Alternatively, surround the lamb with grilled vegetables (page 92).

