

Seven-Hour Leg of Lamb with Anchovy and Garlic

From Stephanie Alexander's
Cooking & Travelling in South West France

Stephanie's note: Once upon a time this dish was probably cooked in the communal village oven after the bread had been baked and the oven was slowing down. A relic of the past you might think –but it fits perfectly into a modern lifestyle. After 20 minutes' preparation you can put the sealed pot into the oven and leave it untouched for 7 hours. At the end of the cooking time, you will have a succulent and most beautifully perfumed piece of meat that slips from the bone at the first touch of a knife. It is reminiscent of the roast lamb my mother used to cook.

A 'Frenched' leg of lamb refers to the way in which the butcher cuts off the knobby end of the shank bone and a little of the shank meat to leave a clean bone protruding, which can be later grasped for easy carving. A Frenched leg will also fit more neatly into a lidded casserole dish, an essential item for this recipe.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 4 anchovy fillets
- 1 x 1.8 – 2kg leg of lamb, Frenched
- 3 large cloves garlic, peeled and quartered
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Sea salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 x 200g piece of pork rind with 5mm fat attached
- 2 bouquets garnis (thyme, bay leaf, parsley stalks, small piece of celery)
- 250ml dry white wine
- 1 cup plain flour
- 125ml water

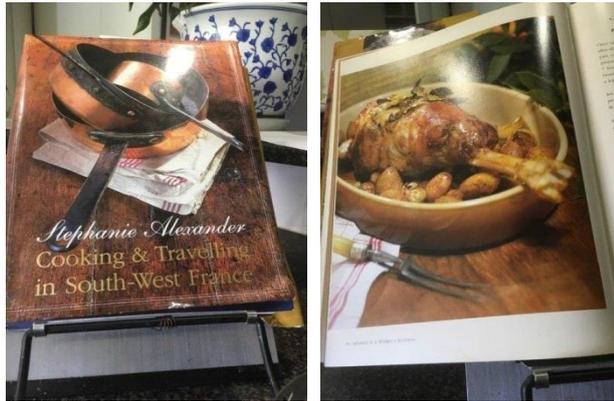
Select an ovenproof dish that will hold the meat snugly and has a tight fitting lid. An oval-shaped, enamelled cast-iron pot is ideal. If your dish is round, test it by forcing the meat in before you start any further preparation. If the lid does not close completely, choose another pot.

Preheat the oven to 120°C. Pat the anchovy fillets free of excess oil and cut each one into 3 pieces. With a sharp knife, make 12 incisions deep in the meat on both sides of the leg of lamb. Force 1 piece of anchovy and 1 piece of garlic into each incision. Grind over some pepper and rub the joint with a little salt. Heat the olive oil in a heavy-based frying pan and seal the lamb on all sides until it is a rich golden brown. Put the pork rind in your selected pot, fat-side down. Add the bouquets garnis and the lamb, then pour over the stock and wine. Put on the lid. In a small bowl, mix the flour and water to a paste. Smear this paste around the joint where the lid fits into the pot, to seal it well. Be generous with this step and enjoy it! Stand the pot on a baking tray to catch any drips and put in the oven. Forget about it for 7 hours.

When ready to serve, remove the pot from the oven. It is most spectacular to crack the sealing crust at the table, but be careful – the pot will be very hot. Lift out the meat and transfer to a hot serving dish. Pour the collected juices into a jug. Cut a little of the pork rind into small slivers so that diners can enjoy its succulence. Gently carve the meat (it will be very tender and will break up). Moisten it generously with the cooking juices and serve with something comforting such as baked potatoes and whole garlic. To follow, I particularly enjoy a soft-leaved green salad turned in the juices left on the plate.

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Images of work in progress for 7 hr Leg of Lamb

Seasoned leg of lamb & pork rind with bouquet garnis



Lamb in pot ready to go & pot sealed with flour paste



After 7 hours & ready to serve

