



Herb Crusted Rack of Lamb with Garlic Smashed Potatoes and Balsamic Reduction

Lamb is both the symbolic and literal food of Springtime, and this simple preparation is both hearty and light, reminding us of the comforting warmth of winter, but leading us forward into the promise of warmer months ahead. The balsamic reduction can be used in many other recipes, and we always hold roasted garlic in high esteem!

4 servings

Ingredients

For the rack of lamb:

2 large racks of lamb, frenched
Extra virgin olive oil
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup loosely packed fresh parsley leaves
1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon herbes de Provence
3 garlic cloves, finely minced
1 cup fresh white bread crumbs
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
½ cup balsamic vinegar

[Chef's Note: Frenched racks of lamb have had the fat and skin removed from the bones, making for a cleaner presentation. You can have your butcher do this for you.]

Herbes de Provence are a mixture of spices typically used in French cooking, and they are available in most supermarkets.]

For the garlic smashed potatoes:

2 heads of garlic, with top ¼-inch sliced off
1 teaspoon olive oil
3 Idaho potatoes, peeled and diced
3 tablespoons butter
¼ to ½ cup heavy cream

Preparation

Roast the garlic:

Preheat the oven to 375° F. Place the heads of garlic on a sheet of aluminum foil. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Close foil over garlic and roast until tender, about 1 hour. Cool slightly. Squeeze garlic from the skins into a small bowl and mash with a fork. Set aside. Increase the oven temperature to 450° F.

Prepare the balsamic reduction:

Place ½ cup of balsamic vinegar in a small heavy-bottomed saucepan. Bring to a low boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat and simmer until reduced to a syrup. Be careful not to burn the syrup. You should have about 1/8 cup. Cool and transfer to a squeeze bottle.

Roast the racks of lamb:

Place the racks in a roasting pan, fat side up. Rub the tops with olive oil and sprinkle with kosher salt and pepper. Roast the lamb for 10 minutes.

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Meanwhile, place the parsley and fresh garlic cloves in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until they are both finely minced. Add the rosemary, *herbes de Provence*, bread crumbs and lemon zest and pulse for another second or two until combined.

Remove the lamb from the oven and press the herbed bread crumb mixture into the meat. Drizzle with the melted butter and return immediately to the oven and roast for another 15 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 145° F for medium rare.

Remove the lamb racks from the oven, cover with aluminum foil and allow to rest for 15 minutes. Meanwhile prepare the potatoes.

Prepare the garlic smashed potatoes:

Put potatoes in a pot of salted cold water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until fork tender, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove the pan from heat and drain potatoes. Put the potatoes back into the pot and return to heat. Cook for 1 or 2 more minutes, stirring constantly to dehydrate potatoes. Remove from the heat and add butter and roasted garlic. Use a hand-held masher to mash potatoes to desired consistency. Add cream until the potatoes reach the desired consistency. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground pepper.

[Chef's Note: When boiling potatoes or any other root vegetables, it is important to start with cold water, and then bring to a boil. The opposite is true when boiling vegetables which grow above the ground.]

Service

Mound some of the garlic smashed potatoes in the center of the serving plate. Carefully cut the lamb into double chops using a serrated knife, being careful not to knock off the herb crust. Place 2 or 3 chops per serving around the potatoes with the bones crossing at the top. Squeeze out small drops of balsamic reduction around the plate, or drizzle directly over the chops, as desired.

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