

Churston Traditional

FARM SHOP

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CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES NOVEMBER

While people make a lot of fuss about spring lamb – and it's not only the Brits: it's the same in practically all European countries – it's a fact that autumn lamb tastes even better.

A summer grazing on herb-rich pastures is reflected in the sheer quality and depth of flavour. And, such is the way of the market, you are likely to pay considerably less for lamb at this time of the year than you did back at Easter.

Lamb is particularly good value at the moment and as we move into the colder days and start feeling the need for more substantial meals it's the ideal meat to go for. So a couple of warming recipes this month – and don't be daunted by the quantity of garlic cloves needed for the first because they will be cooked to a milky, creamy consistency by the time you come to serve the dish.

And finally because there are some excellent pears around at the moment here's a simple way of bringing out the best in a sometimes neglected and often underrated fruit.

SPICED LEG OF LAMB WITH CONFIT GARLIC

Ingredients for six to eight. One leg of lamb weighing about two kilos, 20 unpeeled garlic cloves, bunch of carrots, three tablespoons olive oil, tablespoon ras el hanout seasoning, heaped teaspoon turmeric, few saffron strands, 400ml vegetable or chicken stock made with two capsules, sea salt.

Method. Using the tip of a sharp knife pierce the leg of lamb all over. Mix the spices and the olive oil, rub well into the lamb then place in a plastic bag and refrigerate overnight. The next day heat the oven to 140C gas mark 3. Season the lamb with salt, place in a roasting pan, add a little of the stock (enough to cover the base of the pan) and roast for two hours, turning occasionally and topping up the stock if necessary. Peel the carrots and cut into even chunks, place in the pan with the garlic cloves and cook for a further two hours, topping up the stock if needed. Serve on a large platter with the reduced cooking liquid.

CURRIED LAMB SHOULDER WITH PEAS

Ingredients for four. 1.2kg lamb shoulder cut into large pieces, six small shallots, peeled, one medium onion, chopped, one tomato, 500g frozen peas, 400ml coconut milk, two tablespoons Madras curry powder, teaspoon turmeric, 50g desiccated coconut, 40g unsalted cashew nuts, 25g butter, two tablespoons olive oil, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Heat the oil in a large casserole and add the lamb pieces, cooking over a brisk heat for about ten minutes until browned all over. Add the onion and cook for a further five minutes, then add the curry powder and turmeric, stir well to coat and cook for a further three minutes. Add the coconut milk and enough water to cover the lamb, add a teaspoon of salt, bring up to the boil then cover and simmer gently for an hour and a quarter. Meanwhile sauté the shallots in the butter and season them well. Plunge the peas into boiling water for a minute then refresh under cold running water and drain. Place the cashews in a plastic bag, crush with a rolling pin and grill lightly with the coconut. At the end of the cooking time remove the lamb from the casserole and whizz up the sauce with a blender. Replace the meat, add the peas and the shallots and cook gently for a further 15 minutes and sprinkle the cashews and coconuts over the top just before serving.

SPICED PEARS WITH BRIOCHE AND ALE

Ingredients for four. Four large, firm pears, 150ml golden ale, 100ml full cream milk, two eggs, four thick slices of brioche, 120g golden caster sugar, 80g butter, teaspoon cinnamon.

Method. Peel, halve and core the pears and cook in 30g of the butter in a heavy pan for a minute then add half the sugar and the cinnamon. Cook gently until the mix starts to caramelize then add 100ml water and cook gently for a further 10 minutes, turning occasionally. Meanwhile beat the eggs with the rest of the sugar then mix in the ale and the milk. Soak the slices of brioche in the mix. Heat the rest of the butter in a large frying pan and when sizzling drain the slices of brioche, add to the pan and cook for three minutes on each side over a medium heat until lightly browned. Place one slice on each plate, top with a pear half and drizzle the pears' cooking liquid over the top.

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