

# Braised Lamb Shanks

by Sarah Danforth

One year I was feeling in the mood to do something different for Christmas dinner. There are quite a few lamb farmers where we live and I was strolling through a winter market in McMinnville when I met one of them: Bide-A-Wee Farms. I loved their farming philosophy and wanted to support their (then) still growing business. So I bought two large lamb roasts. Expensive, but she assured me it would be worth it.

I cooked it like I would have cooked any beef stew and it was delicious. My family all loved it and I started a new tradition! Our friends at the Blue Goat in Amity started raising sheep many years ago and they told me that lamb SHANKS were where it's at. When I gave them a try, I tried out a new recipe as well. THIS recipe.



I really don't understand why it is as good as it is. It has no right to be this delicious! It's just a crockpot stew with meat and veg!! But guys... you gotta try it. If you can find a local farmer with lamb shanks, or even a shoulder roast, you should grab it and get started.

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 lamb shanks, around 12-14 ounces each
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 large carrots, peeled & rough chopped
- 2 celery stem, trimmed & rough chopped
- 3 cups pinot noir red wine, or other dry red wine – does not have to be fancy
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 5 sprigs of thyme, or 2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 Tablespoon tomato paste
- 4 cups beef stock/broth, low sodium
- 1 cup water

Pat shanks dry with paper towels. Then sprinkle it with salt and pepper. Heat 2 Tablespoons of oil over high heat in a large heavy based pot. Sear the shanks 2 at a time until browned all over – about 5 minutes. This may be slightly weird because of the shape of the shank and the location of the bones... Just do your best. Remove browned pieces to your **slow-cooker** and repeat with the rest.

Add the red wine and stir to scrape up all the meaty bits from the bottom of the pan. Reduce the wine for around 5 minutes to cook out the alcohol, then add to the meat. Heat the remaining 1 Tablespoon of oil. Add the veggies and brown them as well to add some yummy caramel flavors. Add the garlic in for the last minute.

Add the vegetables, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, tomato paste, beef stock, and water to the slow-cooker. **Cook for 6 hours on high**, or until the meat nearly falls off the bones. You don't want them to completely fall apart, so start checking around 5 hours. When they are ready, remove lamb shanks from the crockpot onto a plate. Loosely cover with foil to keep warm.

## THE SAUCE

- 6 teaspoon cornflour / cornstarch
- 2 Tablespoon water
- 2 Tablespoon cold unsalted butter , cut into 1/2-inch cubes

Strain the sauce into a bowl but do not press the juices out of the vegetables (makes the sauce grainy). Pour the sauce back into the saucepan or pot then simmer rapidly for 10 to 15 minutes over medium heat to reduce to 2 cups – keep an eye on it towards the end, it reduces fast!

Mix the cornflour with the water then add to the sauce (if using homemade stock, start with half and add more as needed). Simmer for 2 minutes or until it becomes a thin syrupy consistency. Remove the pot from the stove. Add butter then whisk until it melts – the sauce will thicken more. Serve with mashed potatoes, polenta, or farro and a side of roasted veggies or bright green peas – enjoy!