

Leg of lamb with rosemary

SERVES 6

The bones in the sirloin end of the lamb have been removed here, leaving the shank end intact, so the leg retains its natural club shape with uncomplicated carving at the table. Order a whole leg of lamb and ask the butcher to remove the hip bone and leg bone (leaving the shank bone intact).

6½- to 7-pound whole leg of lamb, partially boned as described above

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Large handful fresh rosemary

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 clove garlic, peeled and cut into slivers

Set the oven at 400 degrees and have a rack and a roasting pan on hand.

Set the lamb fat side up on the work surface. Remove as much of the fat as possible.

Turn the lamb over so the boned side faces up and remove as much fat as possible from this side (but be careful to keep the meat in one piece, without holes). Sprinkle the meat with salt and pepper and crush some rosemary onto the surface.

Using kitchen twine, tie the meat, reshaping it to form a round piece at the boned end so the leg resembles a whole leg again.

Set the meat fat side up. Rub the surface with the oil and tuck the slivers of garlic here and there into the meat. Sprinkle it with salt and pepper and more rosemary and set it on the rack. Put the rack into the roasting pan and transfer it to the middle of the heated oven.

For medium-rare lamb, roast the meat for 10 minutes per pound (about 1 hour and 10 minutes); an oven thermometer should register 130 degrees. For medium lamb, roast the meat for 12 minutes per pound; an oven thermometer will register 140 degrees.

Remove the meat from the oven and leave it in a warm place for 10 minutes before removing the strings and carving the lamb into thin slices.

Meanwhile, keep the dinner plates in a warm place (lamb should not be served on cold plates) and, after arranging several slices on each one, garnish with extra rosemary. Serve with a gratin of potatoes.