

Delicious summer barbecue fun on a stick

By Susie Iventosch



Lamb Saratoga Chops

Photo Susie Iventosch

When I was a kid, my mom used to fix lamb “Saratogas” for us, especially during the summer barbecue season. I had completely forgotten about them, until something reminded me of them just lately and I tried to find them in the grocery store to no avail. We always enjoyed them and they were fun to eat, too, because it was a long piece of tender and tasty lamb wound into a spiral and held together by a thick wooden skewer. Things on skewers are always fun for kids – kind of like eating pop-sicles!

When I was unsuccessful in locating lamb Saratogas at my local stores, I decided to make them myself, and from my internet search, shoulder meat seemed to be the best part of the lamb to use. So, I picked up a few packages of lamb shoulder and lamb arm shoulder, cut the meat into strips, eliminating a bit of the fat, and fashioned my own Saratogas. Then, after marinating them overnight in a light vinaigrette and red wine with fresh herbs, we

grilled them on the barbecue to medium rare. Eureka! This was exactly how I remembered them from all those years ago. What I later found out is that using the whole shoulder roast, and rolling it first before cutting and skewering it, is probably a lot easier.

Just when I thought I’d re-invented lamb Saratogas, I telephoned Diablo Foods to see if they had shoulder cuts or roasts that would be appropriate for our readers to purchase for making their own Saratogas, and lo and behold, they actually carry them in their meat department. They said the sirloin or shoulder meat are the best cuts to use. Making your own still may be a great idea, because the butcher told me they sell out of their pre-made Saratogas rather quickly.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Cooking Term of the Week

Lumache

Lumache (pronounced loo-MAH-chay) is an Italian word for snail, and in the cooking world lumache refers to snail-shaped pasta shells that are open on one end and hollow inside, with the shell closing in on itself on the other end. Both thick and chunky sauces work well with lumache as the shell is strong enough to support a chunky sauce while a thinner, more delicate sauce can work its way into the open center of the shell.

Lamb Saratogas

(Serves 4 to 6)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds lamb sirloin or lamb shoulder meat, boneless if possible
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2-3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup red wine
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. fresh rosemary snipped from stem and roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tbsp. fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tbsp. fresh mint, chopped (optional)
- 8-10 six-inch skewers about 1/8-inch thick
- Mint sauce (Crosse & Blackwell makes this) or mint jelly to serve with meat

DIRECTIONS

If you buy the whole shoulder roast or sirloin, roll the meat into a log, much like a jelly roll cake. You may be able to buy one already rolled. Insert the skewers through the roll every inch or so, and cut through the roll on either side of the skewers, to make about a 1-inch thick chop. If you buy the shoulder chops, you can cut long strips of meat from the chop, eliminating some of the fat and working around any bones, and roll them in a spiral much to the same effect as the log above. It may take more than one strip to make the finished chop 3-4 inches in diameter.

Place the Saratoga chops in a container with a tight-fitting lid.

Mix oil, vinegar, wine, salt, pepper and herbs for the marinade and pour over the chops. Cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight, turning at least a couple of times.

When ready to serve, remove lamb from marinade and grill to desired doneness. It may take a bit longer to get the very center cooked, so check it before you remove the meat from the grill.

Serve with mint sauce or mint jelly and garnish with a sprig of fresh rosemary or thyme.

Lynn's Top Five

Back to School Specials

By Lynn Ballou CFP®

The first day of school is the day my mom always called the real Mother's Day! So let's take advantage of some quiet moments and review my Top Five for this month, all of which share the theme of being kid related financial planning topics.

Sept. 15 is just around the corner! This is an important date for many who are self-employed and those who receive taxable income from investments and other sources with no withholding. It's also a good time to review your withholding from work, social security and pensions. But I especially mention this to you who may no longer qualify for head of household status and/or who can no longer claim your children as dependents. Check with your tax pro to see if you need to make changes to your withholding or if it would make sense to make an estimated tax payment next month. With just four months left this year, it's time to get solidly on top of these numbers.

Medical Insurance for college Kids. Many colleges have medical insurance plans for their students. When you review these plans, though, you'll often find the coverage to be pretty skimpy especially regarding maximum amounts covered. So, if you can afford to keep your children on your plans, or they already have plans of their own, we typically recommend that you keep these in place as long as possible. Take time to review all the limitations, deductibles and particularly focus on exclusions and maximums.

Teenage or college drivers? If so, call your casualty insurance agent to figure out your coverage

needs. For college-bound children this could be especially important. Can you save some premiums by suspending their coverage while they are living away? Or do they need to stay on your policies? If they have a car with them, should you gift them the car and purchase a separate policy for them that doesn't involve paying to protect your net worth? It's time to call your agent and have an in-depth conversation about choices, options and best moves.

What's the plan for next semester's expenses? No news flash here, but college and private prep schools are expensive! Typically you need to have cash for tuition a semester or more ahead. So it's time to review where these funds are coming from and if they'll be taken out of special accounts earmarked for college such as 529 plans, or your general investment portfolio. If your portfolio has benefited from recent markets, you may decide this is a good time to cash in some gains and set aside funds to cover at least the next semester. And don't forget books, room, board and other miscellaneous expenses. You can also use this as the time to review all your portfolio holdings with an eye toward possible rebalancing. Don't forget any tax implications before making these decisions.

Raising fiscally intelligent children – Don't miss this opportunity! With the barrage of homework you get from the schools, it's easy to run out of steam and not have the time to work with your future adults on financial literacy. For all ages, you can begin with the important life skills of saving for bigger purchases and simple bud-

geting. For teenagers, it's time to think about a checking and savings account, trusting them with small sums such as the money needed for supplies and clothing, and letting them make their own choices and live with the results. By the time they launch for college, you really want these basic life financial skills to be second nature for them.

Hope this was helpful. Enjoy this amazing time of life with your families!

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