

Char-Grilled Lamb Gigot with Swiss Chard, Black Olives and Confit Tomatoes

This dish combines the best English Spring Lamb with classic Mediterranean flavours. The cut of meat used is Gigot, which is the leg of lamb. The bitterness of the olives and sweetness of the tomatoes nicely balance the richness of the lamb. Swiss chard has a delicate, slightly bitter flavour and is an interesting alternative to spinach and other greens.

Serves 4 as a Tapa:

2 lamb gigot (8oz)

1 head of swiss chard, stalks and leaves separated and sliced

10 good quality black olives, stoned and roughly chopped

8 plum tomatoes

200ml lamb or dark chicken stock, preferably home-made

200ml extra-virgin Olive Oil

1 garlic clove, finely sliced

2 springs of fresh thyme

A few basil leaves

Sea salt and black pepper

Bring a medium-sized pan of water to the boil. Lightly score the top of the tomatoes and drop them carefully in the water for ten seconds. Lift out and plunge into iced water until cool, then remove from the water and pat dry. Peel the tomatoes, slice in half and scoop out the seeds. Place in a deep baking tray so the insides are facing upwards and half cover with olive oil. Place a piece of garlic and thyme inside each one and season with sea salt and black pepper. Cook in a preheated oven at 120°C for four hours, turning over once after two hours. Remove from the oven and when cool, take the tomatoes out of the oil, slice into strips and set aside. Any unused tomatoes will keep for around one month submerged in oil in an air tight jar.

Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and blanch the chard stalks for three to four minutes and the leaves for two minutes. Refresh in iced water and squeeze dry.

Cut each lamb gigot from around the bone and portion into two pieces. Season with salt and pepper, rub with olive oil and char-grill on a very hot griddle pan for three to four minutes either side. Cover with foil and leave to rest.

Meanwhile, bring the stock to the boil and add the tomatoes and olives, reduce to a sauce-like consistency. Add the fresh basil leaves and keep warm.

Gently pan-fry the swiss chard in olive oil and season.

Carve each piece of lamb into five pieces and arrange on top of a bed off swiss chard. Spoon on the sauce and serve.