



Rotisserie Leg of Lamb with Lemon & Butter

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Preparation and equipment:

A hot, mature fire
Standard spit

Lamb is the preferred meat of Greeks--especially at Easter. It's hard to imagine an Easter celebration in Athens (not to mention in Chicago, Boston, or Astoria, New York), without a fire pit where whole lambs are spit-roasted to mahogany crispness. The following recipe calls for butterflied leg of lamb, which you can cook easily on a backyard barbecue grill. The turning motion of a rotisserie will give you the best results, but you can also cook the lamb using the indirect grilling method.

Serves 12

Ingredients:

1 butterflied (boned) leg of lamb (about 6 pounds)

for the spice mix:

2 tablespoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons dried Greek oregano
1 tablespoon ground white pepper

to prepare the lamb:

2 lemons, cut in half
1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature

for the basting mixture:

1 cup Greek olive oil
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup dry white wine
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 teaspoons dried Greek oregano
2 teaspoons black pepper

Procedure:

1. Make the spice mix by combining the salt, pepper, and oregano in a bowl. Spread the leg of lamb open and season the inside with 1/3 of the spice mix. Squeeze the juice of half of 1 lemon over the meat and cut the half lemon rind into 1/2 inch pieces. Rub the surface of the lamb with 4 tablespoons butter and sprinkle the lemon pieces on top. Fold the lamb back into a cylindrical roast and tie it with butchers string or pin shut with bamboo skewers. Let it marinate for 4 to 6 hours.
2. One hour before you plan to start cooking the lamb, build a medium-hot fire. Place the lamb on the spit and rub with lemon and the remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Generously season with spice mixture. When the fire is mature, place the spit on the rotisserie and start roasting. Meanwhile, combine the ingredients for the basting mixture (olive oil, lemon juice, wine, garlic, oregano, and pepper) in a large bowl and whisk to mix.
3. After 15 minutes, restir the basting mixture and use it to baste the lamb all over, using a long handled basting brush. Baste every 15 minutes. From time to time, reseason the lamb with spice mix. Replenish the fire as needed.
4. Cook the lamb until crusty and brown on the outside and the meat is well-done and tender (anywhere from 1.5 to 2.5 hours depending on your fire, etc.). The internal temperature will be 170 degrees. (Greeks like their lamb well done.) Unspit the meat on a cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes. Remove the string or bamboo skewers, slice the meat, and serve.