

## Braised Lamb Shanks

6 lamb shanks	¼ cup olive oil
1 onion	1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 carrots	2-3 cups red wine
2 celery ribs, plus leaves	4-5 cups beef stock
4 garlic cloves	1-3 tablespoons arrowroot
4 sprigs of rosemary	2-4 tablespoons Madeira or red wine
6 sprigs of thyme	2 tablespoons balsamico
1 bay leaf	1-2 teaspoons sugar
6 parsley sprigs	Salt and pepper to taste
6 peppercorns	
Vegetable oil for frying	

Dry the lamb shanks in paper towels so they will brown better. Season each shank with salt and pepper. In a very large Dutch oven with a lid, heat enough vegetable oil for frying. Add the lamb shanks in batches, and brown well on all sides. Remove the shanks to a platter. Discard the browning fat.

Coarsely chop the onion, carrot, celery, and garlic cloves. Over low flame, heat the olive oil in the Dutch oven. Add the chopped onion, carrot, and celery to the oil, cook until softened and very lightly browned. In the last 2 minutes, add the garlic, making certain it does not burn. Add the tomato paste, and cook for 3 more minutes.

Add 2 cups of red wine and bring to the boil. Pour in 4 cups of the beef stock, and add the rosemary, thyme, bay leaf, celery leaves, parsley sprigs, and peppercorns. Reduce the heat to the simmer. Submerge the lamb shanks into the liquid, and cover the Dutch oven. The liquid should cover at least 2/3 of the shanks. If it doesn't, add the extra cup of wine and beef stock

Preheat the oven to 325°. Place the covered pot, in the oven and cook for 2 to 3 hours, until the meat is fork tender. Every half hour, rearrange the shanks so that all of them spend some time completely submerged in the liquid. Remove the lamb shanks to a platter and cover with foil while you make the sauce.

Strain the cooking liquid into a large bowl or pot, pressing down on the vegetables in the strainer to extract as much flavor as possible. Allow the liquid to cool so that the fat rises to the top. The best way to achieve this is to refrigerate the liquid. After an hour or so, the fat will have risen to the top, and you can skim it off with paper towels. If you have time to leave it longer, the fat will congeal, and you can remove it with a spoon. Return the liquid to the Dutch oven.

Boil the stock for about 5 minutes to concentrate the flavor, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Dissolve 1 tablespoon of arrowroot in 2 tablespoons of Madeira or red wine. (If

you don't have arrowroot, you could substitute cornstarch.) Whisk this mixture into the simmering liquid.

Check for the thickness of the stock. You don't want a thick sauce, but rather a slightly viscous texture. The degree of thickness will depend on how much cooking liquid you have. If it is not thickened to your taste, add more of the arrowroot and Madeira mixture.

Stir in the balsamico and 1 teaspoon of sugar. Taste for salt and pepper. If needed, add the extra teaspoon of sugar.

Return the lamb shanks to the sauce, cover, and simmer on top of the stove until the shanks are very hot.

Serve one shank person, ladling a little sauce over each. Pass the remaining sauce in a separate bowl.