

Lamb Shank Ragu with Pappardelle

I don't think I could ever get sick of a slow cooked lamb shank dish. Those glorious little bundles of meaty goodness are packed so full of flavour that is only enhanced when slow cooked in a rich tomato & red wine based sauce choc full of herbs, garlic and a hint of cinnamon. I am lost for words which is rare, very rare.

Suitable for the slow cooker. Follow same method and cook on low for 8 hours. If the sauce is a little thin double up on the tomato paste.

Prep time: 25 Minutes
Low Budget

Cooking time: 3.45 Hours

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Serves 8

Olive oil for frying

4 x lamb shanks

4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

1 brown onion, finely diced

Grated rind of 1/2 a lemon

Juice of 1/2 a lemon

1 cinnamon stick or 1/2 tsp of ground cinnamon

1/2 bunch of thyme

2 stalks of rosemary

2 bay leaves

2 cups of good quality red wine

1 cup of beef stock

2 tins of cherry tomatoes (diced is fine but the whole tomatoes are better)

2 tbs of tomato paste

1 tsp of sugar

Sea salt & pepper

3 tbs of finely chopped Italian parsley

800gm of pappardelle, cooked according to packet instructions

Freshly grated parmesan cheese and good quality extra virgin olive oil to serve

Preheat the oven to 160°C

Heat a large ovenproof casserole or pan and add a little olive oil. Season the lamb shanks on both sides generously with salt and pepper and brown in the casserole dish until golden and caramelised on all sides. Remove and set aside.

In the same pan, add a little more oil if needed and turn the heat down a touch. Fry the onion until soft and then add the garlic and lemon rind, stirring to combine. Tie the herbs in a bundle with a piece of string and add to the pan (that way you can just remove the stalks in one go at the end) along with the cinnamon stick and then pour in the lemon juice & red wine. Use a wooden spoon to scrape all the flavour from the base of the pan and allow the wine to cook down for about 2-3 minutes before pouring in the stock, tomatoes and tomato paste. Season with salt, pepper and sugar and stir well to combine. Bring the sauce to the boil and place the lamb shanks back in the pan, tucking them in so they are pretty much fully immersed in the sauce. Tear off a piece of baking paper and lay it on top of the shanks, tucking it in nice and snug and then pop a lid on. Bake in the oven for 3 hours, stirring occasionally and turning the shanks.

After 3 hours remove the ragu from the oven. Pull the shanks out of the sauce and place them in a shallow baking dish. Use tongs or a couple of forks to pull the meat from the bone. It should just fall apart. Discard the bones and any overly fatty bits. Remove the cinnamon stick and the herb stalks from the sauce and put the lamb meat back in the sauce. Stir to combine and place on the stovetop to reduce on a low heat for approximately 15 minutes.

Sprinkle half of the parsley into the sauce and stir to combine. Drain the cooked pappardelle and add it to the lamb, tossing the sauce and the pasta together so every inch of the pappardelle is covered in the sauce.

Divide among 8 serving bowls and top each bowl with the remaining parsley, a generous smattering of parmesan and a drizzle of really good olive oil.
Serve with a crisp green salad and crusty bread.