

# Middle Eastern Lamb Shoulder, Freekeh Salad, Garlic Yoghurt

Lamb shoulder is the total goods, particularly slow cooked, Middle Eastern style with a gloriously nutty, fresh and zesty salad and roasted garlic infused yoghurt. There really is not much more to say about this one except that I am advising you to cook it, today. If not today, then another day, as you will need a little time for this one. It is easy though, as once the Lamb Shoulder is prepared, it's set and forget for hours as it slowly infuses with all of the divine spices of the Middle East, lemon and garlic. Just the best. I love food so much.

I used a much loved Middle Eastern spice blend called Ras el Hanout that I make myself. It literally takes a couple of minutes and if you make a large quantity, it just keeps in the cupboard until next time. It is very handy and very versatile as I use it most of my Middle Eastern dishes. The link to the recipe will be in the ingredients list below. It is also available in some grocery stores or online.

**Prep time: 30 Minutes**

**Cooking time: 3.5-4 Hours**

**\$\$ Medium Budget**

**Serves 4 (may be some leftovers.....winning!)**

1 Lamb Shoulder, bone in for more flavour

1/4 Jap pumpkin, cut into wedges

2 1/2 tbs of Ras el Hanout, <https://emsfoodforfriends.com.au/ras-el-hanout/>

2 tbs of olive oil

1 lemon, halved

2 sprigs of rosemary

1 whole garlic bulb, halved crossways

Sea salt and pepper

2 cups of chicken stock

1 cup of Greek Yoghurt

Juice of 1/2 a lemon

Toasted pistachios, to serve

Mint leaves, for garnish

### **For the Salad:**

1 cup of Freekeh (quinoa or cracked wheat would be equally nice)

1 1/2 cups of water

8 mini truss tomatoes, quartered (any other tomato of your liking will do)

1/2 a red onion, halved and finely sliced top to bottom

1 heaped tsp of sumac

1 cup of flat leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped

1/2 a cup of mint leaves, roughly chopped

Juice of 1/2 a lemon

2 tbs of extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt and cracked pepper

Preheat the oven to 160°C.

Place the 2 tablespoons of the Ras el Hanout, olive oil and juice of the lemon in a small bowl and whisk to combine. Place the lamb shoulder in a lined baking tray and pour over the mixture, massaging into the lamb. Lift the lamb and place the lemon halves, rosemary and garlic halves under the lamb, creating a rack of sorts for the lamb to sit on. Pour in one cup of stock and cover tightly with foil, using a few sheets to make a really good seal. Place in the oven for 3 1/2 hours, checking occasionally to top up the stock but making sure it is air tight to keep all the juices inside. This will ensure a deliciously moist lamb shoulder.

Place the Freekeh and water in a medium saucepan. Season with a little salt and bring to the boil. Once boiling, place a lid on and reduce the heat to a

simmer for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, remove from the heat but keep the lid on so that the freekeh can steam. After 5-10 minutes, fluff with a fork and allow to cool.

Once the freekeh has cooled, transfer it to a large bowl and combine with the tomatoes, onion, sumac, parsley and mint. Season with salt and pepper and toss gently with a spoon until combined. Dress with fresh lemon juice and olive oil just before serving.

After 3 1/2 hours, remove the lamb shoulder from the oven and discard the foil. Remove the garlic bulbs and set aside. Place the pumpkin wedges in the pan, spoon over some of the juices and sprinkle with the remaining 1/2 tablespoon of Ras el Hanout. Season with a little salt and place back in the oven, turning the heat up to 180°C for 30 minutes or until the pumpkin is tender when pierced with a knife. Once the pumpkin is cooked remove from the oven and cover loosely with foil to rest for 10-15 minutes. Once rested, gently pull the lamb apart with a couple of forks and discard the bones.

Use your hands to squeeze the roasted garlic out of its skins into a small bowl, it should just ooze out. Add a sprinkle of sea salt and pepper and the lemon juice and mash with the back of a fork until smooth. Add the yoghurt and mix to combine. This is literally life changing.

To plate the dish, place a generous dollop of the yoghurt on each plate and then smooth out with the back of a spoon. Place some of the lamb shoulder and a pumpkin wedge on top of the yoghurt and a good helping of the dressed salad. Garnish with pan juices, toasted pistachios and mint leaves.

Want to use more of your Ras el Hanout? How about this one?<https://emsfoodforfriends.com.au/harissa-steak-burger-with-preserved-lemon-yoghurt/>





