

AUNT POLLY'S LAMB SHANKS (for 4)

SOURCE: SAVEUR

Sally Schmitt learned this recipe 45 years ago from her aunt Polly Conroy in Berkeley, when she lived there as a student. "Polly was a natural in the kitchen," says Schmitt, who adds that she's never found a reason to change the basic formula.

INGREDIENTS:

4 medium lamb shanks, trimmed	1 lemon
Salt & freshly ground black pepper	2 TBS butter
4 TBS extra-virgin olive oil	3 cloves garlic, peeled/sliced
2 medium yellow onions, peeled/cut into medium wedges	
6 celery stalks, trimmed/cut into thin sticks	
6 carrots, peeled/cut into thin sticks	4 C hot chicken stock
2 C red wine	1 bay leaf
1 large bunch fresh mint	1/4 bunch parsley, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Remove zest from lemon in strips, then chop fine. Transfer zest to small bowl - cover with plastic wrap & set aside. Cut lemon in half. Over a large dish, rub shanks with lemon halves, squeezing to release juices - discard rinds. Generously season shanks with salt & pepper - set aside.
2. Melt butter & 2 TBS olive oil in deep heavy roasting pan over medium heat. Add onions & garlic - cook, stirring often, till onions are soft (about 5 minutes). Add carrots & celery - cook, stirring often, till vegetables are hot (about 3 minutes). Transfer vegetables with slotted spoon to bowl & set aside.
3. Increase heat to medium-high - add remaining 2 TBS oil to roasting pan & brown shanks on all sides (about 10 minutes). Pour stock & wine over shanks, season to taste with salt & pepper - return vegetables to roasting pan. Tuck bay leaf into vegetables & lay all but 3 branches of mint over vegetables. Cover/bake till shanks are very tender & meat falls from bone (about 3 hours).
4. Remove bay leaf & skim fat from liquid. Chop remaining mint leaves - sprinkle over shanks, along with chopped parsley & reserved zest. Serve with mashed potatoes, if you like.