

LAMB MARINATED IN JASMINE TEA WITH SWEET PEA SAUCE (for 4)

Source: FOOD & WINE July 2002 (Laurent Gras, Hotel Palomar, San Francisco CA)

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 C + 2 TBS jasmine tea leaves (about 1/2 oz)
1/4 C hot water
4 6-7 oz pieces of lamb tenderloin
3/4 C crustless fresh brioche crumbs
1 tsp finely grated lemon zest (preferably from a Meyer lemon)
Pinch cayenne pepper
2 C shelled fresh or frozen petite peas (10 oz)
3/4 C chicken stock or canned low-sodium broth

2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 C blanched whole almonds
2 TBS unsalted butter, softened
Salt & freshly ground pepper

DIRECTIONS:

In small heatproof bowl, cover 1/2 C tea leaves with hot water - let stand 5 minutes (or till tea has absorbed the water) - spread tea between 2 layers of dampened cheesecloth - wrap lamb in cheesecloth & refrigerate 2-4 hours.

In mini processor, grind remaining 2 TBS tea to powder & transfer to medium bowl. Grind almonds till fine & add to bowl. Add brioche crumbs, butter, lemon zest & cayenne - season with salt & pepper & stir to form dough-like mass. Pat mixture into 6" square about 1/4" thick onto plastic wrap sheet - wrap with plastic & refrigerate till firm.

Preheat oven to 450° F. In medium saucepan, heat 1 TBS olive oil - add peas & cook 1 minute over moderate heat - add stock - bring to boil - cover/simmer peas till tender (about 5 minutes) - pureé peas & stock in blender & strain through fine sieve into small saucepan - season with salt & pepper.

Remove tea-crumbs mixture from refrigerator & cut into 4 squares. Unwrap lamb & rub off any tea bits - season with salt & pepper. In large ovenproof skillet, heat remaining 1 TBS olive oil - add lamb & cook over moderately high heat till browned all over (about 6 minutes). Press 1 tea-crumbs square onto each piece of lamb & roast in oven 8-10 minutes (till crumbs are crisp & browned & lamb is medium rare). Transfer lamb to carving board - let stand 5 minutes. Reheat sweet pea sauce & spoon onto 4 plates. Slice lamb - arrange on sauce & serve at once. (Tea-crumbs mixture & sweet pea sauce can be refrigerated overnight!) Serve with sautéed vegetables.