

Braised Lamb Shanks with White Beans, Swiss Chard, and Marjoram

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For our lamb shanks recipe, we found that we preferred to braise them in the oven rather than on the stovetop, as the oven provided more even heat. Browning the shanks over high heat in a skillet first added a great deal of flavor to the dish. For our lamb shanks recipe we braised the shanks in chicken stock (which complemented, rather than overpowered, the lamb, as beef or veal stock might have), white wine, and herbs.

INGREDIENTS

Cannellini Beans

- 1 bay leaf
- ½ pound dried small white beans (such as Cannellini), soaked until rehydrated, overnight or at least 4 hours
- 4 cloves garlic (left whole)
- 7 cups water
- 1½ teaspoons table salt

Lamb Shanks and Braising Liquid

- 6 lamb shanks, ¾ to 1 pound each, trimmed of excess fat and fell (thin, white papery covering), see illustration
- Table salt
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 2 medium onions, sliced thick
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and cut crosswise into 2-inch pieces
- 2 medium ribs celery, cut crosswise into 2-inch pieces
- 4 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 teaspoons fresh marjoram leaves, minced, or 1½ teaspoons dried marjoram
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6

If you're using smaller shanks than the ones called for in this recipe, reduce the braising time from 1 ½ hours to 1 hour.

1. For Beans: Bring dried beans, bay leaf, garlic, and water to simmer in large saucepan. Simmer, partially covered, until beans are just tender, 30 to 40 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in salt, cover, and let beans stand until completely tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, reserve cooking liquid, and discard bay leaf and garlic. (Beans in liquid can be cooled, covered, and refrigerated up to 5 days.)

2. For Shanks: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Sprinkle shanks with salt. Heat oil in a large, nonreactive sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add shanks to pan in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding. Sauté until browned on all sides, 5–7 minutes. Using tongs, transfer shanks to a plate as they brown.

3. Drain all but 2 tablespoons fat from the sauté pan; add onions, carrots, celery, garlic, tomato paste, a light sprinkling of salt and 2 teaspoons of the marjoram; sauté to soften vegetables slightly, 3 to 4 minutes. Add wine, then chicken stock to the skillet, stirring with a wooden spoons to loosen browned bits from skillet bottom. Bring liquid to simmer; transfer vegetables and liquid into a deep braising pan, large enough to hold the shanks in a single layer. Add shanks and season with salt and pepper.

4. Cover pan (with foil if pan has no lid) and transfer it to the oven; braise shanks for 1 ½ hours. Uncover and continue braising until shank tops are browned, about 30 minutes. Turn shanks and continue braising until remaining side has browned and shanks are fall-off-the-bone tender.

5. Remove pan from oven; let shanks rest for at least 15 minutes. Carefully transfer shanks with tongs to each of 6 plates. Arrange a portion of vegetables around each shank. Skim excess fat from braising liquid. Add beans and chard and remaining 1 teaspoon marjoram; cook over medium heat until greens wilt, about 5 minutes. Adjust seasoning. Spoon a portion of braising liquid over each shank and serve.

- 2** cups dry white wine
- 3** ounces Swiss chard, cleaned, stemmed, and chopped coarsely

Ground black pepper

Technique

Trimming Lamb Shanks



To minimize the amount of fat in the final product, be sure that before cooking you remove any excess fat as well as the white fell from the exterior of the shanks.