

St. George's Day recipe: slow-braised shoulder of mutton

On chilly days when the wait for the weather to warm seems endless a slow-cooked, full-flavoured joint of meat is just the ticket

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guardian.co.uk, Friday 20 April 2012 12.15 BST



Photograph: Kristin Perers/Pavilion

Serves 4–6

250g/9oz/1¼ cups salted butter, softened and diced
1 large bunch of oregano or rosemary, leaves picked and finely chopped
8 salted anchovies
zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
1 x approx 2.5kg / 5½lb shoulder of mutton on the bone
8 banana shallots, peeled and halved lengthways
2 whole bulbs of garlic, peeled and halved
1 x 750ml bottle of red wine
freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 140C / 275F / gas mark 1. Put the butter in a food processor. Add the herbs, reserving a little for later, and then the anchovies, lemon zest and black pepper. Whizz to a coarse paste – about 20 seconds will do it.

Slather the paste all over the top of the mutton to a thickness of about 5mm / ¼ inch. Put the shallots and garlic in a deep roasting tray and add any remaining herbs. Lay the mutton on top and pour in the wine; the liquid should just be touching the bottom of the meat – if not, top up with water.

Seal the top of the roasting tray with a layer of baking parchment followed by foil. Place the tray in the oven for at least 6 hours (overnight at 100C / 200F / gas mark 1/8 works too), or until the mutton is cooked.

Remove the foil and baking parchment and turn the heat up to 200°C/400°F/

gas mark 6 to crisp up the crust for 20 minutes. Strain the juices, discarding

the garlic and shallots, reduce a little in a saucepan, uncovered, over a medium heat, season and set aside to use as a gravy.

This is lovely served with braised red cabbage and mustard mashed potatoes.