

Lamb Curries

Lamb takes much longer to cook than chicken and if it is not cooked for long enough it will be tough to eat.

If you try and cook a lamb curry all in one go you will end up with a curried lamb stew which may be delicious but it will be nothing like a restaurant curry. Lamb curries, like chicken curries, are made to order so must be made with lamb that is already cooked and tender. Otherwise you, the poor customer, would have to wait at least an hour for your lamb bhuna!

There are two advantages for us home cooks in following the restaurant procedure. Firstly, there is no doubt about how long your lamb curry will take to cook. Your curry will take precisely the time shown in the recipe. Many's the time I have had to put back the time for dinner because the lamb in my stew was not yet tender. I find that the quality of lamb sold in British supermarkets is quite variable and you never really know how long it is going to take to cook.

The second advantage of cooking the lamb in advance is that you don't have to make the curry straight away. You can cook the lamb earlier on in the day, let it cool and then refrigerate it until needed. This takes a lot of the stress out of cooking for guests.

If you used shoulder of lamb you will need to skim off any excess fat from the cooked meat and curry base before you add the lamb to your curry.

You will need to buy about 450g lamb to achieve a trimmed weight of 350g.

ingredients

350g lamb – shoulder or leg (trimmed weight)

1 × 15ml spoon groundnut oil

4 × 15ml spoons [Curry Base](#)

4 × 15ml spoons water

method

1. Trim the lamb of all fat and tissue and cut into fairly large chunks. You are aiming to get about 22 pieces although 1 or 2 more or less is not a problem.
2. Heat the oil in a 20cm heavy bottomed pan over a medium heat.
3. Add the chunks of lamb and stir round so all the pieces are coated in oil.
4. Stir-fry the lamb until it has all changed colour. All you need is for the lamb to change colour. You do not need to fry it so hard that you get brown scorch marks on the meat because if you do it will darken the curry too much.
5. Add the Curry Base and water, stir to mix and bring to the boil. Turn the heat back down to low and simmer, stirring occasionally for about 1 hour.
6. If the sauce gets too dry then add another 15ml or so of boiling water. At the end of the cooking time the lamb should still be simmering in enough sauce to cover the bottom of the pan and bubble around the pieces of lamb. If the sauce starts to sizzle add a little boiling water to ensure that the sauce keeps simmering and does not start frying.
7. The lamb should now be *just* tender. If the lamb is still quite tough then add more water and cook until tender. Depending on the quality of the lamb you may have to cook the meat for up to 30 more minutes.
8. Transfer the lamb and sauce into a bowl and set aside while you begin making the curry. Try and leave the lamb long enough for it to have cooled down sufficiently to have firmed up and absorbed some of the cooking juices.
9. Alternatively, you can let the lamb cool to room temperature and then refrigerate it until needed. This is ideal if you have a number of curries to make or are entertaining guests.
10. I must stress that you should refrigerate the lamb immediately after it has cooled to the point where it won't heat up other foodstuffs in your refrigerator. When you come to re-heat the meat you should make sure it is piping hot all the way through before serving it.



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Lamb Curries
[Index](#)