

Monday, January 11, 2010

Bag of Bones Soup

Many of our clients are new to buying lamb by the side or whole and are unclear as to the process of selecting cuts. We had a very helpful local butcher (who actually teaches butchering) allow us to watch and learn as he processed our lambs. We also have been reading (and cooking) so that we can better advise our clients.

Here is some basic information when ordering lamb.

Unless your supplier is processing a number of lambs at the same time, don't request ground lamb. Almost one pound of meat remains in the grinder and is lost. If you need ground lamb you could process some at home; partially thaw stew meat and run it through your food processor. It won't be perfect but you won't lose as much.

If you want brochette cubes you are going to have to sacrifice a hind leg. This cut provides the best meat for brochettes.

If you want stew meat, the best cut is the shoulder. You could ask for boneless shoulder roast and then cut it for stew meat. However make sure you get the bones back. Cooking the bones in the stew greatly enhances the flavor.

Most of our clients do not want the organ meat. However I recommend they take it anyways. I find the delicate flavour of lamb liver superior to liver from any other animal. It certainly is worth a try. You might find a new addition to your menu.

Many of our clients also don't want the bones. For the most part I think they do not know what to do with them. Soup is the obvious answer. However I want to share some cooking tests that I did with the bones. I love Scotch Broth, a classic lamb based soup so I boiled up a bag of lamb bones. The lamb flavor was weak and totally lost in the soup. When I have made Scotch Broth in the past I have always used the left over leg bone from a roast so the next time I made soup I first roasted the bones in the oven until well browned and then covered them with water and used that to make soup. Wow what a difference. It would have been further improved if I had roasted a few carrots, onions and celery with the bones. Keep an eye on the web site because I will be adding a new recipe for "Bag of Bones Soup". Note: The recipe is now on our web site.

So next time you are ordering a lamb, take it all. It sure will add more tasty diversity to your menu.

Cheers and good eating,
Laurie