
RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Barbecued Harissa Lamb with Baba Ganoush & Koubz

Moroccan and Tunisian food is sweet and salty or sweet and savoury - not 'hot' as many interpretations since the chilli is a modern import from the Americas. Harissa spice paste is an aromatic there which often appears with lamb and pomegranates so it's worth the effort to get that characteristic taste. If you have a greenhouse or can find a Mexican shop you can make your own which keeps well in a fridge or



freezer. To make an appropriate accompaniment the obvious choice is baba ganoush with koubz flat breads. Smokiness is what defines baba ganoush, setting it apart from baked aubergine. Best results are achieved over a hot barbecue - aubergines need to be not just charred, but collapsing in on themselves, and decidedly soft all the way through - so charring them over a flame gives the best flavour.

*400g trimmed lamb shoulder
4 teaspoons harissa
2 tablespoon olive oil
4 tablespoons lemon juice
4 teaspoons chopped oregano leaves
sea salt and cracked black pepper
80g baby spinach
2 pomegranates, seeded
1/2 cup mint leaves
olive oil, for drizzling
4 koubz or large pitta breads
200g baba ganoush
wedges, to serve*

To make the harissa;
1 medium onion, thinly sliced

*a pinch of turmeric
2 tablespoons Trapani salt
4 ancho chiles, stemmed and seeded
3 dried morita chipotle chillies, stemmed and seeded
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon ground caraway seeds
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
a pinch of cinnamon
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil*

Toss the onion with turmeric and salt in a bowl then cover with clingfilm and stand overnight at room temperature. To proceed, heat an iron skillet until hot or use a barbecue. Add the anchos and chipotles and toast over moderate heat, pressing lightly with a spatula until the chillies are very pliable and fragrant, about 1 minute. Transfer the chillies to a work surface and let cool completely, then tear into 1-inch pieces. In a spice grinder pot, coarsely grind the chillies. Next, drain the onion slices in a colander, squeezing hard to extract as much liquid as possible. Transfer the onions to a food processor then pulse until pureed. Add the ground chillies, coriander, caraway, pepper and cinnamon and process to a paste. With the blender on, gradually add the olive oil and puree until fairly smooth. Pour the harissa into a preserving jar then top with oil.

To make the baba ganoush
*2 large aubergines (about 650g)
juice of 1 lemon, plus a little extra
2 tbsp tahini
2, 3 or 4 garlic cloves, crushed
3 tbsp chopped mint or flat-leaf parsley
1 tbsp pomegranate seeds
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil*

Blacken the aubergines on the criss-cross of a gas hob or barbecue, turning regularly with tongs, until completely charred and collapsed (you may wish to surround gas rings with foil, as it can be messy). Allow to cool. Slit the aubergines lengthways and scoop out the flesh in long strands, discarding the skins. Put in a sieve and leave to drain for 30 minutes, or squeeze out if you're in a hurry. Season. In a serving bowl, stir the lemon juice into the tahini until it loosens up. Add the garlic and two-thirds of the chopped herbs, and season again to taste. Add a squeeze more lemon juice if necessary.

Mash the aubergines gently with a fork, and then stir into the tahini mixture in a shallow bowl. Top with the remaining herbs and the pomegranate seeds, if using. Drizzle oil around the edge and serve.

Place lamb in a plastic bag. Mix harissa, oil, lemon juice, oregano, salt and pepper then pour into the bag and massage the lamb. Allow to marinate for a few hours or overnight. Preheat your barbecue and cook lamb until done to your liking. To serve, place spinach on serving plates and top with pomegranates, mint and a drizzle of olive oil. Carve lamb and divide between serving plates with koubz flatbread, baba ghanoush and lemon wedges. Serves 4.

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