

Agnello alle Olive Nere (Leg of Lamb with Black Olives)

Created exclusively for Rosati Family Wines by Joyce Goldstein
Pair with the 2003 Rosati Cabernet Sauvignon

While leg of lamb braised with wine and olives is a celebratory dish in Emilia Romagna, this combination appears in other regions of Italy as well. The olives are usually not pitted, and Italians expect this, just as in France the cherries in clafoutis have pits. However you don't want to worry about chipped teeth from unsuspecting diners, so I have suggested removing the pits.

INGREDIENTS

1 boned leg of lamb, about 4 to 5 pounds
3 plump cloves garlic, cut into slivers
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup olive oil cured black olives, pitted
1 cup dry red wine
1 cups lamb or chicken broth, as needed
3 strips orange peel, about 2 inches long
Chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

DIRECTIONS

Insert slivers of garlic in a boned, rolled and tied leg of lamb. In a Dutch oven or heavy sauce pan heat the oil and brown the lamb over high heat. Add the wine and 1 cup broth and a few strips of orange peel. . Bring to a gentle boil, reduce heat to low and cover the pan. Simmer on stove top until tender, about 1 hour for rare. Remove the leg from the pan and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Meanwhile, add the olives to the pan juices and heat through. Remove the orange peel. Slice the lamb and arrange on a warmed platter. Spoon the pan juices and olives over the meat.

Alternate method: Preheat an oven to 400° F. Make shallow slits all over the lamb leg and insert the garlic slivers into the slits. Sprinkle the leg with salt and pepper.

Warm enough olive oil to form a film in a sauté pan over high heat. Add the lamb leg and brown well on all sides. Transfer to a roasting pan and add the olives and a splash of the white wine. Roast for about an hour for very rare, or until an instant-read meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the leg registers 120 degrees F, basting occasionally with the remaining wine. Or continue roasting until medium, about 130 degrees F. The meat will continue to cook as it rests. Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes, then slice. Serve with the pan juices and olives.

Serves 6.