

Lamb cutlets with mulberry sauce

The mulberry tree is considered the wisest of fruit trees as it doesn't develop its buds until severe weather is no longer expected, which is why even in the most difficult conditions this remarkable tree provides fruit in abundance during August.

This year the mulberry harvest is about as good as it can get. These sweet purple fruits are simply packed with juice.

Because this is one fruit that's considered far too delicate to travel when ripe, you will only find dried mulberries in the supermarket. For fresh ones you need your own mulberry tree - or someone who is willing to share their harvest with you. As there are several ancient mulberry trees in Eynsham this should not be a problem. Black mulberry was imported to Britain in the 17th century at the instigation of James I, for the cultivation of silkworms. Because silkworms survive only on white mulberry leaves this plan came to nothing but left us with a legacy of ancient trees bearing dark red fruits.

To serve 2 people you will need

- 4 lamb cutlets
- One generous handful fresh mulberries
- 2 cloves garlic - chopped fine
- Generous dash of red wine
- Few sprigs fresh parsley - chopped fine
- Oil to fry chops
- 6 medium new potatoes
- Olive oil to finish the crushed new potatoes
- Flour to coat cutlets before frying
- Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season.

Method

- Toss the cutlets in seasoned flour, then fry gently in a drop of oil on both sides until golden brown. Remove from the pan and keep warm.
- While the cutlets are frying place the new potatoes in salted water and cook until done. Strain and crush with a fork, having added a few drops of olive oil to the potatoes, then set to one side too.
- Add the mulberries, parsley and chopped garlic to the meat juices in the frying pan and toss in a generous dash of red wine, lower the heat and allow to simmer.
- When the mulberries are cooked (will only take a moment) remove half with a slotted spoon and reserve, then use a potato masher to crush the rest of the mulberries into the liquid. Because they are so juicy, it is highly unlikely that you will need to add further liquid to the pan.
- Taste sauce, season accordingly and assemble the dish by dividing the crushed potatoes onto the plates. Now pour a little of the sauce over them and arrange the cutlets on top.

Next spoon on the whole mulberries. Garnish with mint or parsley and pour any leftover sauce around the dish.