

DOUBLE LAMB CHOPS WITH TAPENADE AND POLENTA

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2006 BRIDESMAID RED NAPA VALLEY

SERVES: 4-6

INGREDIENTS:

Tapenade

1 cup oil cured black olives
2 teaspoons freshly grated orange or lemon zest
1 ½ tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2-3 tablespoons coarsely chopped celery hearts and leaves
Freshly ground black pepper
Salt

Chops

8 double-bone rack lamb chops
2-3 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
¼ cup chopped fresh mint
2 cloves garlic, mashed
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Extra virgin olive oil

Polenta

4 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup polenta
2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme
½ teaspoon minced fresh rosemary
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
¼ cup grated fontina cheese
Several gratings of nutmeg
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

METHOD:

To make the Polenta, combine the stock, milk and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the polenta, in a thin stream, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring often, for 45 to 50 minutes, until the polenta pulls away from the sides of the saucepan and is creamy and no longer gritty. Add all the remaining ingredients, mix well, and taste for seasoning. Serve warm, one generous scoop per serving.

To make the tapenade, pit and coarsely chop the olives. Place in a bowl and add all the remaining ingredients, except the salt. Taste and add salt if necessary. It may not need any as the olives may provide all the salt you need. Serve at room temperature.

Cut each rack into four 2-bone chops. In a mortar, mash together the thyme, mint, garlic, salt and pepper with a pestle, or just use a good knife on a cutting board. Smear the spice mix on the meaty sides of the chops, and let them marinate for 2 hours at room temperature, or for as long as overnight in the refrigerator.

Have both the polenta and the tapenade ready before you cook the lamp chops. Lightly brush the lamp chops on both sides with olive oil. Place on the grill and grill, rotating the chops a quarter turn on each side to create nice crosshatch marks, for about 5 minutes total for medium-rare.

To serve, put a mound of polenta in the center of each plate, arrange the lamp chops around it, and pass the tapenade separately.