Barbecued leg of lamb with chilli, honey, rosemary and garlic

Cosciotto di agnello al barbeque con peperoncino, miele, rosmarino e aglio

Barbecued lamb just doesn't get better than this. When Italians barbecue, we don't use overpowering sauces or rubs, but instead stick to traditional herbs and other ingredients that enhance the flavours of the meat. If you prefer, the meat can be cooked in the oven at 200°C/gas mark 6 for 40–45 minutes. Serve with a tomato and red onion salad.

Serves 6–8
1 leg of lamb (2kg), deboned and butterflied
5 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
20g fresh rosemary leaves
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 fresh, medium-hot red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
2 tablespoons runny honey
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
Juice of 1 lemon
Salt

1. Light the barbecue. Meanwhile, make shallow incisions in the lamb on the skin side with a small, sharp knife, leaving a 3cm gap between each incision. Push a garlic slice and a few rosemary leaves into each cut. The lamb will take about half the rosemary. Brush the lamb with the oil and season with salt.

2. When the barbecue is ready (the coals will be covered in a fine greyish white ash), put the lamb on the barbecue. Cook for 15 minutes, turning it over every 5 minutes until nicely charred (and turning it over if it starts to catch).

3. Meanwhile, make the basting sauce. Strip the remaining leaves from the rosemary, reserving the stalks, and finely chop the leaves. Put them in a small bowl and add the chillies, honey, vinegar and lemon juice. Stir to combine.

4. Move the lamb to a raised rack on the barbecue and throw the reserved rosemary stalks onto the direct heat underneath the lamb.

5. Brush the lamb with half the sauce and put the lid on the barbecue. Cook for 10 minutes, turning if necessary. Brush over the remaining sauce and cook for a further 5–10 minutes or until the lamb is cooked as you like it.

6. Remove the lamb from the barbecue, cover with foil and leave to rest for 10 minutes before carving into slices.