LfL

Bavarian State Research Center for Agriculture

Lamb and Wild Herbs – Discovering Regional Delicacies

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This booklet presents ways of bringing lamb and wild herbs together to create delicious meals. There is something especially fitting about the combination of lamb's meat and wild herbs, as the sheep themselves feed off grass and the herbs growing where they graze. Both wild herbs as well as sheep husbandry are closely linked to cultural landscapes, especially species-rich grasslands. In Bavaria, around 1.06 million hectares or about 15% of the total area of the state are used as grassland. Over 400 plant species are grassland specialists. Extensively used grassland can contain up to 89 plant species per square metre. This makes it one of the most species-diverse biotopes in the world, comparable with tropical rain forests.

Many wild herbs found in our cultural landscapes are edible, and they can make interesting alternative ingredients for recipes. A wealth of distinctive edible flowers provides for further aesthetic enrichment in the form of decoration that you can eat. The combination of lamb and wild herbs unites centuries-old tradition and modern cuisine in the form of healthy, wholesome and delicious dishes.

We wish you lots of enjoyment during the cooking and then – bon appétit!

Jutta Kotzi and Kerstin Gabler

Image descriptions on page 46

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Sheep Farming – thousands of years of agricultural practice

Bavaria has a long and varied tradition of sheep husbandry. Even today, the animals still live very close to nature. They spend most of their lives outdoors on pastures, only being taken indoors during periods of extreme cold or in the lambing season. Many flocks are kept on enclosed paddocks, but there are still shepherds who wander through the countryside with their herds for months on end – especially in Lower Franconia. In the region of the Bavarian Alps, the sheep can spend the summer high up on the mountain pastures. This means that sheep farming in Bavaria represents a close-to-nature form of husbandry that is appropriate to the species and provides for high-quality meat, milk and wool products from the region.

Such products can be obtained from sheep farms with their own farm shops. Addresses are available at www.regionales-bayern.de and from the State Association of Bavarian Sheep Farmers at www.schafe-in-bayern.org. You are sure to find corresponding addresses close to where you live in the internet.

Statistics on sheep farming in Bavaria (as of 2019):

- Approx. 220,000 ewes
- Approx. 6,300 sheep farmers
- Approx. 250 professional shepherds
- Flocks from 1 to 1500 sheep
- 5-10 new apprentices and professionals in sheep husbandry per year

Species-rich grassland in Bavaria:

- Approx. 20% of Bavarian grasslands count as being species-rich; i.e. at least 25 plant species per 25 m²
- The largest areas of species-rich grassland are to be found in sub-Alpine regions, the Bavarian Forest and in dryer habitats in Northern Bavaria
- The abundant flowers represent an important source of food for bees and other insects
- The composition of species depends on the local conditions (soil, microclimate) and how the land is used.
  - dryer habitats with sage, maiden pink, thyme or bellflowers, for example
  - habitats with moderate soil moisture, e.g.meadows of false oat-grass with rough hawksbeard, centaury or bedstraw
  - wetlands such as wet meadows with ragged robin, great burnet or bistort

You will find much more information on Bavarian grasslands at:
www.lfl.bayern.de/iab/kulturlandschaft/082759/

Grazing sheep sustains cultural landscapes …

Today's cultural landscapes came into being on account of their usage, and they can only be preserved in this form by continuing such usage. Allowing sheep to graze maintains open spaces that would otherwise become overgrown with bushes. The centuries-old interplay between the shepherd, his dogs and the flock has a direct effect on the vegetation, and this is intended. The shepherd decides when to let the sheep graze a given area, and how intensively. This has meant that sheep have given rise to unique landscapes such as the juniper heathlands of the valley of the river Altmühl, low-nutrient areas of the Hersbrucker Alb and low-nutrient, species-rich limestone grasslands in the Rhön. Some vegetation types, including those juniper heathlands, have come about because of the grazing sheep, and it is self-evident that preserving them can best be achieved by continuing this usage.

… and promotes species diversity!

In the course of hundreds of years, the people living between the Rhön (North Bavaria) and the Alps (South Bavaria) have bred types of sheep that perfectly match the varying soils, climatic conditions and altitudes encountered in Bavaria. 37 different breeds of sheep are registered with the Bayerische Herdbuchgesellschaft für Schafzucht, a Bavarian sheep-breeding association. In addition to this, many other breeds are used that are not included in a systematic breeding programme. Eight breeds of sheep are under threat of dying out, including the Coburger Fuchsschaf, the Rhönschaf and the Weißes Bergschaf. An important contribution towards the preservation of these threatened breeds can be made by specific marketing of the meat for consumption.

Species-rich sheep pastures provide habitats for insects and birds that greatly benefit agriculture in general as pollinators and natural enemies of pest species, for instance. The sheep's presence helps the animals and plants, often themselves endangered, to spread into new habitats. While grazing in the open countryside, their fleeces and hooves transport the seeds of many kinds of plants from one pasture to the next. Some plants such as the cleavers have evolved tiny hooked hairs for that very purpose. When sheep brush against such a plant, seeds or other parts of the plant catch in the fleece. They hitch a ride to some other pasture where they fall off. This means that sheep are an important factor in biotope networking. In earlier times, people themselves helped to spread plants in a similar way. While gathering edible wild herbs and fruits, roots and edible fungi, seeds would stick to clothing and shoes and get carried to another location.

A specific example: Sheep grazing ensures survival of the Apollo butterfly in the Kleinziegenfeld valley (Weismain/Kulmbach)

© Manfred Rauh, LPV Lichtenfels

In earlier days, the Apollo butterfly (*Parnassius apollo*) was widespread throughout the northern part of the Franconian Jura uplands. Now the last small population is located in the Kleinziegenfeld valley on a juniper meadow near the town of Weismain. The Apollo needs rocky limestone terrain, not overgrown with bushes, where white stonecrop (*Sedum album*) can grow. This is the only plant that the Apollo caterpillars can live on. If the white stonecrop gets smothered by high grass, it disappears. And if the white stonecrop disappears, so does the Apollo, for it has nothing to feed on. This means that the survival of both the white stonecrop and the Apollo butterfly depends on their habitat being kept free of higher vegetation.

To this end, the area is grazed by sheep in spring. Shortly before the caterpillars hatch, the flock leaves the juniper meadow so that enough food remains for the caterpillars. After the caterpillars have transformed into beautiful Apollo butterflies, the sheep can continue grazing the area and thereby maintain the conditions needed for the next generation of butterflies. However, the grazing sheep ensure the survival not only of the Apollo butterfly, but of many other species that are dependent on this habitat such as the endangered red-winged grasshopper, the critically endangered rattle grasshopper and the large blues (Source: Landschaftspflegeverband Landkreis Lichtenfels e. V.).

Rediscovering wild plants for use in the kitchen

Humans have gathered wild plants for food throughout their entire evolution. In the course of time, however, man discovered the advantages of encouraging certain plants to grow and began to cultivate species such as cabbage varieties, chicory, endives as well as other green salad plants that remain familiar to us today. Recently, the use of local wild herbs has undergone something of a renaissance: They can provide an interesting supplement to our cuisine. We differentiate between wild plants that can be used as vegetables, i.e. in larger quantities, and the stronger-tasting herbs that are used more sparingly.

Of course, it is important to be sure what is edible and what not. Therefore this brochure deals with wild plants that are likely to be quite well known. If you are not sure, there will certainly be competent wild herb experts in your area from whom you can get the information you need. It is also a good idea to use relevant specialist sources to identify plants properly.

There are some edible wild herbs that were widely used in the past, such as Good-King-Henry (also known as poor-man's asparagus), that have become so scarce in parts that we should avoid using them in the kitchen. Please leave protected and rare plants alone! There are always alternatives available, including planting cultivated forms in your own garden. It goes without saying that collecting wild plants in the countryside should be done with a careful eye to the ecological implications. Awareness of what we do and use can help to preserve at least the current range of plants. We can combine the joy of combing the countryside for ingredients that cannot be bought with the satisfaction of contributing to environmental awareness.

Collection of national Red Lists by country:
https://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/BfN/service/Dokumente/skripten/Skript547.pdf
The Bavarian Red List: www.lfu.bayern.de/natur/rote_liste_pflanzen/index.htm

Wild herbs – Mother Nature's kitchen garden

We recommend people who have little or no experience in the use of wild herbs to start with small quantities, because these 'wild power packs' stimulate the metabolism and digestion.

For use in the kitchen, we distinguish between:

Wild vegetables that can serve as a side dish or main constituent of a meal, for instance stinging nettles, ground elder, dandelions, plantains, chickweed and hogweed.

Aromatic herbs that are used in small doses, such as mugwort, wild oregano, ground ivy and yarrow.

Wild salad leaves that are used as raw salad ingredients together with cultured leaves (up to half quantities), such as daisies, young ground elder leaves, garlic mustard, dandelion, sorrel, plantain, chickweed and hedge bedstraw.

Edible wild flowers that are used for their flavour and for decoration, e.g. daisies, wild oregano, ground ivy, cornflowers, dandelions, mallow, sage, yarrow and brown knapweed.

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Further reading and identification keys

This booklet is intended for distribution in different countries, and this means in very varied habitats. Therefore it is not possible to recommend specific titles – you will find what you need in well-stocked book stores and online.

Internet:

http://www.lfl.bayern.de/iab/kulturlandschaft/026605
http://www.lfl.bayern.de/itz/schaf

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Recipes

The recipes are suitable for four persons except where large quantities indicate otherwise.

The table on pages 44-45 provides an overview of the cuts of lamb and the wild herbs used in each recipe. Many of the wild herbs used are available throughout the growing period. If you harvest them in your own garden, you always have fresh, young leaves at hand (e.g. ground elder). The leaves of garlic mustard can be found in spring and autumn (recipes on pp. 27, 28, 31, 40 and 43). Wild flowers are available according to their seasons. Daisy flowers for garnishing desserts can be found almost all year round. Yarrow flowers bloom from June onwards (recipes on pp. 30 and 43). Nettle seeds can be harvested from late summer on (recipes pp. 27, 28 and 32). If you allow nettles to occupy a space in your garden, you will always have a supply of fresh leaves and tasty seeds at hand. They can also be dried and stored.

Garlic has been used more and more in recent years, often in large quantities and especially in meat dishes. To give our local wild herbs a chance to reveal their often delicate flavours to us, it is a good idea only to use garlic, if at all, in small quantities at first. Therefore the recipes in this brochure are mainly without garlic. As you gain experience in using them, you will probably start incorporating your own ideas and creativity anyway.

Lamb Stock – basic recipe (Luise Raab)

Luise Raab, home economics expert and herbalist, has made her passion for cooking one of the mainstays of the Schamberger Hof. Whether the Schamberger Hof is hosting a festival or a seminar or providing catering, there is always something special on offer – including wild herbs, of course. (www.schamberger-hof.de)

Preparation:

Wash the bones and vegetables, cut up the vegetables coarsely, sauté in oil with onions. Add vegetable stock and seasoning, simmer for about 1½ hours until the broth clears. Then strain, season to taste and enjoy with soup ingredients as desired.

Ingredients:

500 g lamb bones
250 g soup vegetables (e.g. celeriac (celery root), leek, carrot, parsnip or parsley root)
1 finely chopped onion
2-3 tablespoons of oil for frying
1½ l vegetable stock
salt and pepper
1 bay leaf
a pinch of ground cardamom
or 1-2 capsules of cardamom
5 juniper berries
5 allspice fruits

Luise's Lamb Liver Schöberl soup (Luise Raab)

Ingredients:

3 leftover bread rolls
4 eggs
100 g butter
200 g lamb liver
100 g bacon
1 finely chopped onion
4 tablespoons of finely chopped ground elder
20 finely chopped ground ivy leaves
salt, pepper, marjoram
zest of lime

Preparation:

Soak the rolls in water, separate the eggs. Mix the butter and egg yolks to a froth, add minced liver. Thoroughly press out the water from the rolls and add them as well. Fry the chopped bacon with onions and herbs and combine everything to make a smooth mixture. Season well and fold in the beaten egg yolks. Spread the mass onto a sheet of baking paper in a baking tray. Bake in a preheated oven for 15-20 minutes at 160 °C (fan oven). Allow to cool and then cut into small diamond shapes. These are the 'Schöberl'. Serve with the hot broth.

The liver Schöberl can be frozen for use later. The recipe is also suitable for calf, venison or beef liver.

Liver Toast as a starter (Luise Raab)

Preparation:

Sauté shallots and chopped bacon. Add the diced liver and herbs and braise in oil. Allow to cool down a little, then blend or chop finely. Season with salt, pepper and Parmesan cheese. Toast the bread and cut into triangles. Spread the liver purée onto the toast. Grill for about 1-2 minutes in a pre-heated oven at 200 °C.

Arrange on a plate, garnish with florets. Enjoy with beer or white wine.

Venison liver can be used instead of lamb, as both are very tender.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons of finely chopped shallots
100 g breakfast bacon
200 g lamb liver
2 tablespoons mixed wild herbs e.g. oregano, ground elder, yarrow, plantain, finely chopped
oil for frying, salt and pepper
½ tablespoon finely chopped sage
1 tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese
4 slices of toast
edible florets for garnishing, e.g. daisies, wild oregano, sage, yarrow, mallow

Lamb in Aspic (Markus Schnitzler)

Ingredients:

400 g boiled ham of lamb (or cold roast lamb)

Other ingredients can be included as desired, e.g. carrots, cauliflower, gherkins, dried flowers (or fruit cocktail).

The ingredients should all be cooked through or blanched and ready to eat.

500 g aspic jelly

Preparation:

Dice the boiled ham or roast meat into cubes (1 x 1 cm) and put in a bowl. Cut the vegetables and flowers into bite-sized pieces (slices, strips or cubes), add to the meat and mix.

Melt the aspic in a water bath. Pour two thirds of it onto the ingredients and leave to cool for 1 hour. When the mixture has jelled, add the rest of the aspic to give the ingredients an airtight seal. Leave to cool.

To detach the aspic from the bowl, put the bowl in warm water for a very short time. Then turn out onto a platter.

Keeps for around 14 days in the refrigerator.

Enjoy with bread or fried potatoes.

Roasted Lamb Loin in a Herb and Sausage Meat Jacket (Luise Raab)

Preparation:

Mix wild herbs, seasoning and sausage meat well. Spread out the pig's caul (fat netting) and distribute the seasoned sausage meat over it, slightly larger than the loin. Lay the loin in the middle and make a roll, making sure that the loin is no longer visible. Roast in pre-heated fan oven at 150 °C. The time required depends on the size of the loin (rule of thumb: 35-45 min.).

Delicious either hot or cold.

Goes well with baked potatoes and salad of the season. Suggestion for an accompanying drink: pilsner beer or fresh white wine.

Ingredients:

6 tablespoons of finely chopped wild herbs, e.g. nettles, wild oregano, ground elder, ground ivy, dandelion leaves, plantain, chickweed salt, pepper, curcuma (turmeric) 300-400 g veal sausage meat depending on the size of the loin

1 pig's caul (obtainable from a butcher)

1 loin of lamb, approx. 300 g

Loin of Lamb in disguise (Jutta Kotzi)

As a starter, one loin is sufficient for four people. Use two loins for a main dish, and then double the quantities of the other ingredients. Rosemary potatoes or grilled pumpkin wedges make excellent side dishes.

This recipe uses the quince vinegar relish described on page 20 – it should mature for at least six months. Please bear this in mind when planning for this recipe. The basic recipe for vinegar relish originated from the courses in herbalism given by Dr. Dirk Holterman.

Ingredients:

1 small twig of rosemary

300 g sweet and sour quinces from the quince vinegar relish

2 tablespoons of the quince vinegar relish

1 tablespoon finely chopped yarrow leaves

1 pinch of cardamom

1-2 tablespoons of olive oil

wild herb salt

1 loin of lamb

1 pack of puff pastry or Luise's strudel dough (half quantities, see p. 20)

1 yolk of egg and 1 tablespoon of olive oil if the strudel dough is used

Preparation:

Pluck and finely chop some rosemary leaves (separate from twig). Blend the quinces with the vinegar relish and mix with herbs, ground cardamom, olive oil and a little wild herb salt. Dab the loin of lamb dry. Spread the quince all over the loin. Cover and allow to steep for 1-2 hours in the refridgerator.

Pre-heat the oven to 160-180 °C (fan oven):

- Roll out the **puff-pastry dough** and moisten the edges with a little water. Roll the loin in the pastry lengthwise until it is just covered. Then fold in the ends of the pastry and roll the loin in the rest of the pastry.
- If the **strudel dough** is used, grease the mould with olive oil. Brush the top surface of the dough with egg yolk.

Put the rolled-in loin in a suitably long, ovenproof mould and bake in the oven for 45 minutes.

Remove the dish from the oven, cut into approx. 3 cm thick pieces and serve immediately. Serve with quince jelly and edible wild flowers if available. This dish can also be enjoyed cold.

Quince Vinegar Relish (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

500 ml apple or wine vinegar (or vinegar from another fruit)

500 g sugar

1 kg quinces cut into approx. 2 cm pieces

Preparation:

Slowly heat up the vinegar and dissolve the sugar in it. The vinegar should be hot, but not boiling. Put the quince cubes into a clean preserving jar (rinse out first with hot water) and pour the hot vinegar-sugar mixture over them. The quince must be covered with liquid. Close the jar with an airtight seal.

The vinegar relish should mature for at least six months.

The more time the vinegar has to mature, the milder it gets and the fruit aroma becomes more pronounced. It can also be enjoyed on its own in small quantities. Keep the vinegar relish in your mouth for at least 30 seconds to allow the full aroma to develop.

Luise's Strudel Dough for two strudels (Luise Raab)

Ingredients:

250 g flour

125 ml lukewarm water

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 pinch of salt

For the crust:

1 egg yolk

1 tablespoon olive oil

Preparation:

Mix all the main ingredients to make a smooth dough. Divide into two portions, cover and allow to rest for 20 minutes.

To fill, roll out thinly on a surface powdered with flour.

The surface of the strudel bakes to a specially delicious crust if you brush on a mixture made of one yolk of egg and a tablespoonful of olive oil.

Rolled Lamb Roast (Luise Raab)

Preparation:

Cut the leek into small strips, dice the red pepper and mix to a spreadable mass together with the two kinds of cheese. Mix in the wild herbs, lemon or lime peel and seasoning. Spread the mixture evenly over the meat. Roll up the meat with the filling and tie using kitchen twine. Salt and pepper the surface of the roll and then roast gently all round in hot oil or clarified butter. Add the root vegetables, pour on some stock and braise slowly at medium heat in the pre-heated oven (fan oven 160 °C, about 1½ hours).

Set aside for a short while after removing from the oven. Blend the sauce, cut slices of the roll and enjoy with mashed potatoes and buttered green beans, for example.

Hint: If you would prefer not to use cheese, you can spread the roll with medium-strong mustard and lay rashers of smoked ham over it.

Ingredients:

1-2 leeks

1 red pepper

150 g cream cheese

100 g Gorgonzola or other blue cheese

5 tablespoons of finely chopped wild herbs such as wild oregano, ground elder, dandelion, yarrow

lemon or lime peel
salt, pepper, curry, paprika
approx. 600-700 g belly meat (abdominal flap)

oil or clarified butter for gentle roasting

some root vegetables cut small

stock for adding to make a sauce

Stuffed Wild Herb Leaves (Anna Prankl)

Ingredients for the rolled-up leaves:

1 onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon each of finely chopped wild oregano and ground ivy
olive oil, salt and pepper
1 bread roll, soaked and pressed to remove excess water
1 egg
300 g minced lamb
hand-sized leaves of comfrey or hogweed

Ingredients for the sauce:

2 finely chopped onions
1 finely chopped carrot
1 finely chopped celeriac (celery root)
approx. 250 ml vegetable stock
cream if desired

Preparation:

Briefly sauté the onion with the ground ivy and oregano in a tablespoon of oil. Add to the minced lamb with the pressed-out roll and the egg. Season with salt and pepper.

Blanch the washed comfrey or hogweed leaves for one minute and drain them in a sieve. Spread the minced meat mixture onto the leaves, roll up the leaves and tie using kitchen twine.

Heat a tablespoonful of oil and fry the rolled leaves briefly. Add the vegetables and the onions and fry until slightly browned. Carefully add vegetable stock and braise for about 30 minutes with a lid on the pan or pot. Remove the stuffed leaves and keep warm. Blend the sauce, season to taste and add cream if desired.

Creamed potatoes, nettle spinach and braised tomatoes are suitable side dishes.

Hogweed and comfrey leaves are large enough to make sensible-sized rolls. The leaves should be young, but large enough for the purpose. You can also use two smaller leaves: After blanching them, roll two together to obtain a useful size. It may be wise to roll the central rib of comfrey leaves flat using a rolling pin, or cut it flat.

Anna Prankl, a herbalist from Höslwang (Chiemgau), passes on her knowledge of wild herbs during guided walks both on the Alpine pastures as well as in the region around the large Chiemsee lake, sometimes called the 'Bavarian Sea'. Her Valais Blacknose sheep are there to help on the pastures.

Stuffed Leg of Lamb (Christine Ebner)

Ingredients for the filling:

4 slices of toast, coarsely chopped

200 g finely puréed lamb liver

100 g cream cheese

1 egg

3 stoned and diced dates
salt and pepper

1 pinch each of ground cinnamon and aniseed

1 handful of finely chopped wild herbs such as stinging nettle, wild thyme, ground elder, plantain, yarrow

1 teaspoon grated orange peel

Ingredients:

1 leg of lamb, boned and cut to lie flat

salt and pepper, paprika

oil for frying

1 finely chopped onion

1 finely chopped clove of garlic

finely diced celeriac (root celery), leeks, carrots

250 ml lamb stock or vegetable stock

125 ml red wine

Preparation:

Mix the ingredients for the filling to a smooth mass. Season the leg of lamb with salt, pepper and paprika on both sides. Spread the filling over the meat, roll up the meat and tie.

Heat oil in a roasting pan and fry the leg of lamb all over. Add the onion, garlic and vegetables and fry these as well. Add some lamb stock. Turn frequently and keep adding stock.

Slowly braise in a pre-heated fan oven at 160-180 °C for about 1½ hours. When cooked, remove the roast from the oven. Add red wine to the sauce and blend it. Season to taste.

Garnish with ribbon noodles or Spätzle (egg noodles).

Hint: If you have some of the filling left over, mix in a few breadcrumbs to thicken the mixture. Use two spoons to make spoon-sized portions and simmer for 20 minutes in lamb stock or vegetable stock. Served with finely chopped chives, this makes a delicate soup as a starter.

Christine Ebner, farmer, herbalist and bee-keeper, runs a sheep farm with her husband in Reischach near Altötting as a sideline. She has two breeds of sheep, the Schwarzköpfiges Fleischschaf and East-Frisian milk sheep. She passes on her knowledge of herbs in seminars, talks and guided tours (www.edermuehle.de).

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Lamb Roulades (Luise Raab)

Ingredients for 4 roulades:

2 red onions, finely chopped
5 tablespoons of finely chopped wild herbs such as stinging nettles, wild oregano, ground elder, ground ivy, yarrow olive oil for frying
300 g feta cheese
200 g finely chopped dried tomatoes
2 tablespoons of chopped olives
salt and pepper
per person: one roulade from the leg, approx. 150-200 g
200 ml each of red wine and stock

Ingredients for the sauce:

500 g finely chopped red onions
1-2 finely cut carrots
1 tablespoon sugar
200 ml each of red wine and stock
1 twig of rosemary or thyme
1 bay leaf

Preparation:

Briefly sauté the onions with the wild herbs in oil and then let them cool down a little. Crumble the feta cheese and mix with tomatoes and olives. Add the herb mixture and season. Spread the mixture onto the roulades, roll them up and fix using kitchen twine. Add salt and pepper, fry in olive oil for a short time before adding stock and red wine and then braise until ready. The time needed depends on how thick the roulades are and the age of the lamb; approx. 1 hour. Remove the meat from the pot and keep it warm.

For the sauce, put the onions, carrots and sugar into the pan and allow them to caramelize a little. Add red wine and stock and then the rosemary or thyme and bay leaf. Allow the sauce to thicken a little, put the roulades back into it and reheat them.

Goes well with fresh baguette and salad.

Braised Lamb with Tomatoes and Wild Herbs (Jutta Kotzi)

Preparation:

Sauté the onions in olive oil. Add the meat and fry, turning to fry all over. Add seasoning and salt, continue frying for one minute while stirring continuously.

Add 200 g of the tomatoes and 700 ml of water. Braise for 1 hour at a low heat and with the lid on.

Add the remaining tomatoes and braise for another 45 minutes. The sauce should have thickened. If needed, thicken with a little tomato paste. Add the wild herbs and simmer for another 10-15 minutes.

Carefully stir-fry the nettle seeds in fairly hot olive oil until they darken and give off a nutty aroma, then season with salt and lemon juice. Distribute the roasted nettle seeds over the lamb when serving the dish.

Can be served with rice, couscous or bread (flatbread, focaccia or olive bread).

Ingredients:

3 red onions, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 knuckles of lamb or 800 g lamb's meat (approx. 8 cm pieces)
½ teaspoon each of ground cumin, cardamom, cinnamon and allspice
1 teaspoon ground curcuma
salt
1 kg finely cut, ripe tomatoes
700 ml water
1-2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 handful of garlic mustard cut into strips
6 handfuls of chopped mixed wild herbs such as mugwort, wild oregano, ground elder, mint, thyme, stinging nettles
8 tablespoons nettle seeds
1 tablespoon olive oil
lemon juice

Spare Ribs of Lamb in Sauerkraut (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil
1.5 kg spare ribs of lamb
wild herb salt, Cayenne pepper, ground paprika
2 finely cut onions
2 apples
800 g Sauerkraut
5 juniper berries
3 bay leaves
5 black peppercorns
250 ml lamb stock, vegetable stock or white wine
2 handfuls of garlic mustard leaves
5 ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) leaves
4 tablespoons of nettle seeds

Peparation:

Wash the spare ribs and dab dry, then season them with the wild herb salt, Cayenne pepper and ground paprika. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan. Briefly fry the spare ribs in the oil, and then take them out again. Fry the onions in the same pan until glazed. Peel, core and cut the apples into large pieces; add them to the onions with the Sauerkraut. Crush the juniper berries slightly using a knife blade and then add them with the bay leaves and peppercorns. Season the Sauerkraut with wild herb salt, Cayenne pepper and paprika. Add the liquid and mix with the Sauerkraut. Put the lightly fried spare ribs onto the Sauerkraut in the saucepan. Heat the saucepan until the contents boil, then reduce the heat and braise until the meat easily detaches from the bone (approx. 1 hour with the lid on).

Wash the garlic mustard and ground ivy leaves and cut them into strips. Fry the nettle seeds in a little olive oil until they get crisp, then add a little salt.

Add the wild herbs to the meat when it is cooked. Arrange the Sauerkraut and spare ribs on plates. Scatter the roasted nettle seeds overthe dish.

Hint: This dish can be prepared in the pressure cooker; then it is ready in 20 minutes.

Can be served with small roast potatoes or fried potatoes.

Braised Lamb with Fruit (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons olive oil
4 finely chopped red onions
800 g lamb's meat, roughly cubed
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon Cayenne pepper
¼ teaspoon cumin
salt
1 litre of boiling water
10 each of fresh apricots and dates (soak dried fruit for approx. 2 hours)
2 apples
1 quince
2 oranges
2 handfuls of ground elder leaves
10 ground ivy leaves
5 mint leaves
yarrow flowers

Preparation:

Heat the olive oil in a pan and sauté the onions until they look glazed. Add the lamb's meat and fry together. Add the seasoning and the salt and stir fry for one minute. Add the water, cover and stew at a low temperature for 1½ hours (if the meat is very tender, one hour is enough).

Stone the apricots and dates and cut them into small pieces. Peel the apples, quince and oranges and dice them. Add the fruit to the meat and stew for another 30 minutes.

Finely chop the ground elder, ground ivy and mint leaves and add them shortly before serving the dish. Remove the yarrow florets from the stalks and decorate the dish with them.

Braised Slices of Lamb Shank with Wild Herbs (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

1.2 kg shank slices of lamb (approx. 3 cm thick)
wild herb salt
freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons flour
olive oil
2 finely diced onions
250 ml white wine
250 g carrots
250 g parsnips
250 g ripe tomatoes
1 lemon (organic quality)
1 handful of garlic mustard
1 handful of wild carrot leaves
1 handful of ground elder
5 ground ivy leaves
4 anchovy fillets

Preparation:

Salt and pepper the shank slices and then roll them in flour. To prevent them from bulging out during the frying, tie each shank slice with kitchen twine. Fry from both sides in pre-heated olive oil. Add the onions and fry until they glaze. Add the white wine and more salt and pepper and then braise the meat in a covered dish for 1 hour.

Add the carrots, parsnips and the skinned tomatoes and braise for another hour. In the meanwhile, cut the lemon peel into thin strips (a zester is useful). Chop the wild herbs finely, chop the anchovy fillets and mix with the lemon peel.

Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the wild herb mixture over the shank slices just before serving.

Leg of Lamb with Nettle Seed Crust (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons finely chopped wild oregano
2 tablespoons nettle seeds
1 teaspoon honey
wild herb salt
2 juniper berries, finely crushed
freshly ground pepper
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 leg of lamb
3 onions
4 carrots
4 parsnips
some olive oil for the vegetables

Preparation:

Mix oregano leaves, nettle seeds, honey, wild herb salt, juniper berries, some freshly ground pepper and olive oil to make a paste.

Rub the paste into the leg of lamb all round and allow to steep in the refrigerator for several hours.

Skin and quarter the onions, wash the carrots and parsnips and cut into large rounds. Toss the vegetables in olive oil so that the pieces are thoroughly covered. Season with wild herb salt. Put the Leg of lamb into a roasting pan with the onions, parsnips and carrots and roast at 160 °C in a fan oven for 1½ hours. Baste the leg of lamb with the roasting juice and turn the vegetables from time to time. Take care not to disturb the crust. If not

enough roasting juice appears, you can use broth, lamb stock or white wine. Then the oven temperature should be increased to 180 °C and the roasting time extended for 20-30 minutes to ensure that the crust forms properly. The leg of lamb is cooked as soon as the meat detaches easily from the bone.

Hint: Nettle seeds can be harvested from late summer onwards by pinching off the seed heads or cutting off the upper parts of the plants. Make sure they have dried through before storage. A good way of doing this is to spread them over a baking tray and heat them in an oven at a maximum of 40 °C and with the door slightly open. Remove foreign parts first. Store the dried seeds in a screw-top jar.

Hint: This dish goes well with potato wedges roasted with it, bread, or pumpkin slices (e.g. Sweet Dumpling, Butternut, Crown).

Jutta Kotzi, landscape engineer and herbalist, grew up in the southern part of the Chiemgau. She is a great enthusiast for plants, animals and cooking – and feels deeply connected with the countryside. This provides fertile ground for new culinary ideas that spring up as she contemplates wild herbs and the animals that graze on them.

Jutta's Guinness Stew (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

2 onions
2 carrots
2 parsnips
500 g shoulder of lamb or leg of lamb cut into approx. 4 cm sized pieces
2 tablespoons flour
3 tablespoons olive oil
½-1 teaspoon cinnamon
wild herb salt
freshly ground pepper
2 bay leaves
4 broad-leaved thyme twigs
4 twigs of wild oregano
1 bottle of Guinness Stout

Preliminary remark: A Guinness stew is usually made with beef. Also, many stew recipes involve potatoes. This variant uses lamb's meat and pumpkin instead of potatoes – a firm-fleshed pumpkin such as Muscade or Crown makes for an interesting alternative.

Jutta's tip: "I've been using cinnamon as a spice for meat dishes for a long time now, especially for game, beef and lamb, and I'm still a great fan of it. So it certainly has to go into my Guinness stew."

Preparation:

Pre-heat the oven to 170 °C (fan oven). Cut the onions into eighths. Halve the carrots and parsnips lengthwise and cut into pieces about 3-4 cm long.

Wash the pieces of meat and dab them dry, then toss in flour. Heat up the oil in an ovenproof casserole or braising pan and fry the meat in it. Add the cinnamon and stir-fry it briefly as well. Now add half the vegetables and fry them a little. Season with wild herb salt and pepper, then add the bay leaves and 2 twigs each of thyme and oregano. Pour on half of the Guinness and briefly bring to the boil. Put the covered casserole into the oven. Check from time to time to see if there is still enough liquid. Add more Guinness as required.

After one hour, add the rest of the vegetables and the Guinness, and stew for another 30-45 minutes. Then remove the cover, raise the temperature to 180 °C and cook for another 15 minutes.

Remove the rest of the thyme and oregano from the twigs, chop finely and garnish the dish with it.

Hint: This dish can also be prepared on the hob of the stove.

Lamb Cutlets with Lavender (Siglinde Beck)

Ingredients:

1 egg

salt and pepper

some fresh lavender flowers, rosemary and thyme twigs (dried rosemary and thyme can be used in winter)

4 tablespoons breadcrumbs

8 chops

2 tablespoons flour

Preparation:

Beat the egg with the salt and pepper. Remove the herb leaves from the stems and mix with the breadcrumbs (set a small portion of herbs aside for garnishing).

Coat the cutlets first in flour, then in the beaten egg and then in the breadcrumb mixture. Fry to golden brown on each side for about 4 minutes, garnish with the herbs.

Goes well with baguette, buttered green beans and cherry tomatoes that have been briefly heated in a pan.

Siglinde Beck, a herbalist, runs an organic farm with a farm shop on the northern edge of the Nördlinger Ries. Galloway cattle, Shropshire sheep and donkeys are to be seen on the pastures. Visitors can share in her love of nature through seminars, by going to the shop and by taking part in one of her donkeytours (www.holunderhof-lohe.de).

Lamb Liver Terrine (Markus Schnitzler)

This recipe shows that it doesn't always have to be lamb, and mutton is perfectly suitable for cooking as well.

Preparation:

Cut up the liver into small pieces and mince it (mincer holes around 3-6 mm). Add salt and the prepared seasoning and mix together. Mix in the eggs.

Then put the meat through the mincer. If the mass is too lean, add around 60 ml of oil. Mix together with the apple, herbs and liqueur.

Now combine the liver and meat mixtures and put into a greased ovenproof mould. Bake at 180 °C for around 45-60 minutes.

Take the terrine out the oven while it is still hot and trickle honey over it so that it can sink in. Enjoy hot or cold!

Ingredients:

1 kg lamb (approx. ⅔ liver, ⅓ meat, e.g. shoulder or sinewy parts)

22 g salt

6 g prepared seasoning for liver sausage or 1 g caraway, 2-3 g pepper, a pinch of nutmeg

1 large egg or two small ones (for binding)

approx. 60 ml oil if required

1 large apple, peeled and chopped (or cranberries)

herbs as available/desired, e.g. wild oregano, rosemary

a shot of orange liqueur (55%) or cognac, honey

Hint: If you have a lot of liver and meat available, adapt the quantities in the recipe and preserve some of the mixture in jars for use later.

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Markus Schnitzler, butcher and agricultural expert, runs a sheep farm that markets its own produce (www.ammersee-lamm.de, Saturday market in Dießen am Ammersee). He also gives seminars on the subject of home slaughtering and 'school on the farm'.

Bavarian Shish Kebab (Luise Raab)

Ingredients:

3 skinned onions

800 g meat from a shoulder of lamb or leg of lamb, cut into 3 cm pieces

vegetables such as courgettes, parsnips etc. cut into slices; red pepper, pumpkin cut into 3 cm pieces

Marinade, see pp. 39 and 40 – double quantities!

Preparation:

Separate the individual onion 'leaves'. Put the meat pieces, onion leaves and vegetable pieces onto skewers in alternating order. Pour the marinade over them, cover and allow to steep for several hours in the refrigerator. All parts must be covered by the marinade.

Alternatively, you can marinade the pieces of meat and the vegetables first and then put them on the skewers. That can be done very easily using a freezer bag, and that ensures that all pieces are thoroughly soaked in the marinade.

Hint: You can also use this marinade for pieces of neck or shoulder meat and then grill them.

Marinade with Mint or Lemon Verbena (Markus Schnitzler)

1 small sprig of mint or
1 small sprig of lemon verbena (or both mixed together)

3 tablespoons of lemon juice

3 tablespoons of dandelion syrup

100 ml olive oil

1 pinch of cardamom

Wash the herbs, dab them dry and chop finely. Mix the lemon juice, cardamom, syrup and olive oil and add the chopped herbs.

Jutta's Special Marinade

100 ml elderberry syrup

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon juniper berries, crushed

1 teaspoon finely chopped mugwort

1 pinch of cinnamon

Mix all the ingredients thoroughly.

Each of these marinades is enough for around 400 g of cubed meat. These marinades do not contain salt. Salt should only be added shortly before the meal is ready.

Wild Herb and Oil Marinade (Luise Raab)

200 ml olive oil

4 tablespoons of finely chopped wild herbs, e.g. mugwort, wild oregano, ground elder, garlic mustard, thyme

1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar

5 coarsely crushed black peppercorns

Mix all the ingredients together

Honey and Rosemary Marinade (Armin Friedrich)

Peel of half a lemon (organic quality)

2 rosemary twigs

150 g honey

Grate the lemon peel or use a zester. Remove the rosemary leaves from the twig and chop finely. Mix with the zest of lemon and honey. This marinade should rest for a day before use in order to intensify the aroma.

Armin Friedrich maintains an 'Ark farm' and herd book breeding farm for Alpine Steinschafe, Walachian sheep and Bentheim Black Pied pigs in Wertach. He produces delicious sausage and ham specialities as well as pies and terrines.

(www.die-schafhalterei.de)

Quince Butter (Jutta Kotzi)

The quince vinegar relish described on page 20 can also be used to make quince butter. This is a delicious accompaniment to grilled lamb. All three butter recipes go well with grilled meat.

Preparation:

Purée the quinces with the quince vinegar relish. Add the butter and the salt and blend them as well until the quince pieces are very fine and the butter is uniformly mixed in. Put into a mould and allow to set in the refrigerator.

Ingredients:

100 g sweet and sour quinces from the prepared quince vinegar relish
1 tablespoon of the quince vinegar relish
250 g butter at room temperature
1 pinch of salt

Yarrow Butter (Jutta Kotzi)

Hint: Pluck the yarrow florets. Form butter balls from the yarrow butter and roll them in the flowers. Allow to cool thoroughly.

Preparation:

Finely chop the yarrow. Thoroughly blend the butter together with the yarrow leaves, salt and lemon juice. Shape as desired and allow to set in the refrigerator.

Ingredients:

1 handful of yarrow leaves
250 g butter at room temperature
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Juniper Butter (Dr. Dirk Holterman)

Ingredients:

25 large juniper berries

250 g butter at room temperature

¼ teaspoon honey

¼ teaspoon salt

Preparation:

Chop the juniper berries and then crush well with a fork. Mix together with butter, honey and salt using a fork or blender. Shape as desired and cool in the refrigerator.

Dr. Dirk Holterman, biologist, journalist and proprietor of the Gundermann Academy, has been sharing his prodigious knowledge of so-called weeds with prospective herbalists for over fifteen years.

Flower Butter (Jutta Kotzi)

Ingredients:

1 handful of edible flowers

200g butter at room temperature

1 pinch of salt

2 teaspoons lemon juice

Preparation:

Suitable flowers are, amongst others, daisy, ground ivy, nasturtium, lavender, dandelion, mallow, red clover, common marigold, rose, sage, chives, sunflower and thyme.

Cut the plucked petals very finely and mix well with the butter, salt and lemon juice. Put into any suitable mould and cool.

Wild Herb Salad (Jutta Kotzi)

Preparation:

Wash and drain the salad leaves and the wild herbs. Cut the salad leaves into strips or pull them apart into small pieces. Put the salad and wild herbs into a bowl. Prepare a marinade of balsamic vinegar, herb salt, honey and oil; pour over the salad. Mix carefully.

Garnish the wild herb salad with daisies.

Hint: If you like, you can serve the salad together with thinly cut slices of raw mutton ham and/or feta cheese.

Ingredients:

250 g fresh salad leaves of the season, e.g. corn salad, young spinach or iceberg lettuce

2 handfuls of hedge bedstraw (shoot tips)

1 handful of chopped and mixed wild herb leaves such as daisies, young ground elder, garlic mustard, dandelion, burnet, yarrow, plantain

2 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar

wild herb salt

a little honey

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 handful of daisy flowers

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Recipe	Cut of lamb	Wild herbs	Page
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Flower Butter	--	daisy, ground ivy, mallow, nasturtium, lavender, dandelion, red clover, common marigold, rose, sage, chives, sunflower	42
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