

# 'Royal' lamb with a creamy almond sauce

## Shahi Korma

There are many Indian dishes that were inspired, a few centuries ago, by dishes from other countries. *Shahi korma* – lamb cubes smothered in a rich almond and cream sauce – owes its ancestry to Persian food.

It could be served with rice (perhaps 'Spiced basmati rice', page 148) or a bread (*naan*, *chapati*, or *paratha*) and a vegetable such as 'Cauliflower with potatoes', (page 109). It would be good to have some kind of tomato or onion relish on the side. When I want a quick, but elegant, meal, I have been known to serve *shahi korma* with plain rice and a crisp green salad.

In my recipe here, I have cooked *shahi korma* the traditional way, that is on top of the cooker. If you like, you could do the final long cooking in the oven. This is particularly useful if you are making a large meal and need the top of the cooker for other dishes. Just preheat the oven to gas mark 4, 350°F (180°C) and, once you have combined the meat, salt, cream and water and brought it to a boil, you can cover the pot and put it in the oven instead. The cooking times and other general directions remain the same.

Serves 4–6:

- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- A 1 inch (2.5cm) cube of fresh ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 oz (50g) blanched, slivered almonds
- 6 tablespoons plus 4–8 fl oz (100–225ml) water
- 7 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 lb (900g) boned lamb from the shoulder or leg or stewing beef (chuck), cut into 1 inch (2.5cm) cubes
- 10 whole cardamom pods
- 6 whole cloves
- A 1 inch (2.5cm) stick of cinnamon
- 7 oz (200g) onions, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander seeds
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1¼ teaspoons salt
- ½ pint (275ml) single cream
- ¼ teaspoon garam masala (page 18)

Put the garlic, ginger, almonds, and 6 tablespoons of the water into the container of an electric blender. Blend until you have a paste.

Heat the oil in a wide, heavy, preferably non-stick pot over a medium-high flame. When hot, put in just enough meat pieces so they lie, uncrowded, in a single layer. Brown the meat pieces on all sides, then remove them with a slotted spoon and put them in a bowl. Brown all the meat this way.

Put the cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon into the hot oil. Within seconds the cloves will expand. Now put in the onions. Stir and fry the onions until they turn a brownish colour. Turn the heat down to medium. Put in the paste from the blender as well as the coriander, cumin, and cayenne. Stir and fry this mixture for 3–4 minutes or until it too has browned somewhat. Now put in the meat cubes as well as any liquid that might have accumulated in the meat bowl, the salt, the cream, and 4 fl oz (100ml) water. If you are cooking beef, add another 4 fl oz (100ml) water. Bring to a boil. Cover, turn heat to low and simmer lamb for 1 hour and beef for 2 hours or until the meat is tender. Stir frequently during this cooking period. Skim off any fat that floats to the top. Sprinkle in the *garam masala* and mix.

N.B. The whole spices in this dish are not meant to be eaten.

Taken from: Madhur Jaffrey's Indian Cookery