

Hungry? Here's why you should be eating goat meat

By **BOBBY GHOSH**
Bloomberg Opinion

Is America at long last discovering that goat is the G.O.A.T.? Having returned to my home in New York after three years abroad, I am surprised to see so many restaurant menus featuring my favorite form of protein, which I learned to love growing up in India.

If this represents an evolution in taste, then it is as welcome as it is overdue. Generations of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, Africa and Latin America have despaired of Americans' resistance to goat meat. How, we have wondered, could a culture that annually celebrates the turkey, quite possibly the most unappetizing meat known to man, be immune to the attractions of the tastiest?

If you've never tried goat, take it from me that it is more flavorful than beef, less fatty than pork, more moist than lamb. (Comparisons with chicken and turkey would, frankly, dishonor the noble quadrupeds that gave their lives for our pleasure.) Better yet, try it for yourself: There is a great recipe at the end of this column, and you can find me on TikTok preparing goat burgers from this recipe.

Americans' aversion to goat meat has had real-world repercussions. For one thing, it distorts perceptions of cuisines that make liberal use of goat. My own pet peeve is that many Indian restaurants, bowing to popular prejudice, often use dry-aged lamb in dishes that actually were designed for goat. These are much different meats, the former best cooked after being aired for several days and the latter ideally prepared within hours of slaughter, but most chefs didn't know to adjust the spice mixtures, marination or cooking times. The results were usually unpalatable.

For years, when friends asked me to recommend an Indian restaurant in New York, I always added the caveat, "As long as you don't order the lamb."

But Americans who weren't so forewarned never got the chance to develop a proper appreciation for the depth of Indian cuisine. They likewise didn't enjoy the authentic experience of countless African and Latin American dishes.

By shunning goat, Americans also were unknowingly depriving themselves of the most nutritious of meats — lower in fat, cholesterol and calories than the "big four" of chicken, beef, pork and lamb. They also are probably unaware that goat is gentler on the environment, as well as more humanely produced.

Another drawback: Because most Americans don't eat goat, the meat industry has never developed a nationwide distribution system for it, certainly nothing like the networks that put the big four within arm's reach of desire anywhere and everywhere. Outside the large metropolitan areas with large immigrant communities, vast swaths of the country are goat-free. Millions of immigrants living in the goat deserts have little access to their first-choice meat.

It isn't only a matter of distribution. Culinary historians like Therese Nelson and Michael Twitty attribute the absence of goat from the American gastronomic mainstream to deeper prejudices. Twitty, author of the James Beard Award-winning "The Cooking Gene," says "goat [isn't] widely used because of its association with the so-called 'third world' and non-white people in the popular imagination."

Nelson, a chef, author and founder of the organization Black Culinary History, puts it more bluntly: "Goat — like oxtail, pork belly, chicken wings and offal before it — is still the delicious providence of many minority cultures," she says. But for the majority, "goat isn't worth it because its primary consumers are from cultures Americans aren't interested in fully embracing."

If New York is playing its customary role as the



Dreamstime-TNS

Americans' aversion to goat meat has had real-world repercussions, writes Bloomberg Opinion columnist Bobby Ghosh.

nation's trendsetter, then there is hope that the rest of America will catch on.

In many of New York's Indian eateries, the king of meats is finally taking its rightful place in curries and biryanis. Emboldened by the growing appetite for goat, chefs like Chintan Pandya of Dhamaka, for my money the best Indian restaurant outside India, are going even further with dishes that simply wouldn't have worked with substitutes, like gurda kapura, a snack made from kidneys and testicles. "Ten years ago, we might not have risked using goat, but now we can be unapologetic about it," Pandya says.

There is goat aplenty, too, in the Mexican food trucks that are riding the current Tik Tok-fueled craze for birria. When I left New York in 2018, it was hard to find a place that served the goat-based stew, the pride of Mexico's Jalisco state; at most taco joints, it was offered in beef. (The honorable exceptions were mostly at the other end of the country, in Los Angeles.) Now, thanks to social-media campaigns calling for authenticity, the goat version is growing more common.

The big question is whether goat can now make the leap from ethnic cuisine to mainstream menus and dining tables. It bodes well that celebrity chefs like Andrew Zimmern and Dan Barber have become enthusiastic advocates, offering recipes that

recommend goat as a substitute for lamb and beef. Zimmern, in particular, has used his TV shows to challenge the common perception that goat meat is gamey and hard to cook. "I've become the clarion caller for goat in America," he says.

He can depend on an affirming chorus of millions of immigrants. Repeat after us, fellow Americans: "Goat is the G.O.A.T.!"

ROASTED LEG OF GOAT WITH LEMON SAUCE

Typically I buy two rear legs of goat and invite friends over for a simple meal. I roast the goat right on the rack in the center of my oven and serve it with a classic Greek avgolemono sauce. I team the goat with charred eggplant salad, plenty of leeks, potatoes, carrots and fennel in the pan catching the drippings, along with freshly made flatbread.

— Andrew Zimmern

- 3 tablespoons rosemary, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup dill, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons oregano, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup garlic, minced
- Salt
- Pepper
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Two young goat legs, roughly 6-7 pounds each, at room temperature
- Mixed vegetables, such as trimmed carrots, trimmed leeks, halved fennel bulbs and halved onions
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 large eggs

145 degrees. Transfer the goat to a carving board and let rest for 30 minutes. Place the roasted vegetables from the sheet pan around the legs, leaving all the other bits on the pan.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Skim any fat off of the sheet tray, leaving the drippings and browned bits behind. Set the sheet tray on a burner and pour the chicken stock over the drippings, whisking to loosen all of the browned bits. Tip the mixture into a saucepan. Add the white wine and 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and cook until reduced to 1 cup at a light boil.

In a medium bowl, add a pinch of salt, the remaining 2 tablespoons of lemon juice and the eggs. Very gradually whisk in 1/4 cup of the reduced stock, then gradually whisk in the rest. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring constantly over low heat, until thickened, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons of dill and season the sauce with salt and pepper. Carve the goat and serve with the roasted vegetables and the sauce.

Bobby Ghosh is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He writes on foreign affairs, with a special focus on the Middle East and Africa.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

In a medium bowl, mix together the rosemary, dill (reserve 2 tablespoons), oregano, garlic, salt, pepper and vegetable oil.

Poke the goat all over with a small, sharp knife, then rub the herb mixture all over the legs, stuffing it into the holes.

Place the legs directly on the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Put a sheet tray with the mixed vegetables underneath the goat to catch the drippings. Roast for 75 to 80 minutes, or until a thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the leg registers

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022
YOUR BIRTHDAY by Stella Wilder

Born today, you are the kind of person to whom things happen at a sometimes startling pace, and yet you never let yourself feel victimized in any way as a result. On the contrary, you use the events of your life to motivate you and put you in the driver's seat, so that ultimately, though things may have begun by someone or something else, you will eventually take charge and be the one calling the shots.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Self-awareness increases today, and the benefits you enjoy as a result will propel you forward just as you had hoped. A plan comes together.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) -- You're going to have to send a message today in some kind of shorthand, but take care that you don't omit the one essential piece of information!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) -- A tangled situation begins to unravel today, and you may find yourself temporarily on the outs with someone who has been on your side until now.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Give yourself all the time you need to accomplish your assigned tasks today. You must not distract yourself with issues not directly related.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- What you seek today may stay hidden for a while, causing frustration and, for a bit, perhaps a little panic, too -- but this won't last!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- You don't want to wait to do what needs to be done today; that which is left undone is sure to cause you no end of trouble in the days to come.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Your enthusiasm for a project proposed by someone may wane somewhat today. Others may be interested in what you have in mind instead.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- What happens during the first part of the day may give you little indication of all that may happen during the latter half. Be ready for anything!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- As you strive to solve a mystery at home, you'll come to realize that not everything is as it appears to be. Who's hiding what -- and why?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) -- You'll want to be sure that you get something right the first time today, as you're not likely to have a second chance -- at least not for some time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -- Someone appears from out of your past and warns you against doing something you've decided cannot be avoided. You must reconsider!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) -- Facts and figures, essential as they are, may be lost in a cloud of conjecture and assumptions that you, ultimately, will want to avoid.

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