

Think roasted rack of lamb is too fancy? **Wrong! It's easy**

By SARA MOULTON
Associated Press

Want to wow your sweetie on Valentine's Day? One of the ways I spell romance is with a roasted rack of lamb for two. Most of us never get to enjoy this wonderful dish outside fine restaurants, but there's no reason not to make it at home. In fact, this recipe — adapted from one we used to make at *Gourmet* magazine all the time — is hard to mess up.

A single rack of lamb comprises eight chops, or half of the rib cage. At the supermarket these days you'll usually find a choice of New Zealand or American racks. The former are smaller than the latter and taste slightly more lamb-y. Either kind will work here, but in both cases you have to make sure that the chine bone has been removed by the butcher. Otherwise you'll be unable to cut the rack into chops.

The butcher also can trim the rack for you, though you're welcome to do that at home. If I were going to roast the rack without a crumb layer, I'd protect the meat from drying out by leaving the layer of fat on the top of the meat. But this recipe's crumb layer performs the same function as the layer of fat, so off it goes, along with the tough silver skin beneath it.

The best way to remove the silver skin is with a sharp boning or paring knife. Slide it under the skin at a 20 degree angle and slice it first one way, then the other, along the length of the rack.

Then — if it hasn't already been done for you — you'll want to "French" the bones. This is an American



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An easy side dish to go with this rack of lamb would be an herbed rice.

term for a French technique, in which the meat and fat are removed from the top few inches of the end of each chop by scraping the bones with a knife until they are completely clean. What's left is the succulent heart of the chop, from which a long spare bone extends like an elegantly curved handle.

Now you're ready to sear

the meat, then top it with a mustard-mayonnaise mix, then finally the crumbs. You can prep the roast to this stage earlier in the day, then park it for an hour. When dinner is about 30 minutes away, just pop it in the oven. Be sure to let it rest afterward to ensure that the chops are every bit as juicy as Cupid meant them to be.

Editor's Note: Sara Moulton was executive chef at *Gourmet* magazine for nearly 25 years and spent a decade hosting several Food Network shows. She currently stars in public television's "Sara's Weeknight Meals" and has written three cookbooks, including "Sara Moulton's Everyday Family Dinners."

Rack of Lamb for Two with Rosemary Crumb Crust

Start to finish: 55 minutes (30 minutes active)
Servings: 2

2 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
1 teaspoon minced garlic
3 medium scallions, white and 1 inch of the green parts, thinly sliced (about 1/4 cup)
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
3/4 cup fresh breadcrumbs (made by pulsing 1 large slice rustic white bread in a food processor)
Salt and ground black pepper
One trimmed and Frenched rack of lamb, (7 to 8 ribs, about 1 1/4 pounds)
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Directions

1. In a medium oven-safe skillet over medium-high, heat 1 1/2 tablespoons of the oil. Add the pepper flakes, if using, and garlic, and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Stir in the scallions and rosemary and cook, stirring, until the scallions are slightly softened, about 30 seconds. Stir in the breadcrumbs and remove from the heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then transfer to a bowl and set aside. Wipe out the skillet.

2. Heat the oven to 400 F.

3. Return the skillet to medium-high heat and add the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Season the lamb with salt and pepper, then add it to the skillet, meat side down. Sear until well browned on the meat side and the ends, about 5 minutes. Remove the skillet with the lamb from the heat and pour off the fat.

4. In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise and mustard. Spread the mixture evenly over the meat side of the lamb, then press the rosemary crumbs into it. Transfer the oven-safe skillet to the middle shelf of the oven and roast until it reaches 120 F at the center for medium-rare, about 10 to 12 minutes.

5. Transfer the meat to a cutting board and let it rest for 10 minutes before slicing into chops. Arrange on 2 plates, overlapping the rib bones. If some of the crumbs fall off, just sprinkle them over the plated chops.

Nutrition information per serving: 650 calories; 360 calories from fat (55 percent of total calories); 41 g fat (10 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 105 mg cholesterol; 32 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 2 g sugar; 37 g protein; 760 mg sodium.



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Try making a rack of lamb for two with rosemary crumb crust this Valentine's Day.