

Lamb chops with heavy hitting spice rub

By ELIZABETH KARMEL
Associated Press

The hardest thing about grilling lamb chops is buying them. Because once you get them home, the rest is easy.

My favorite style of chops resembles lamb lollipops — a long, slender bone with a fat nugget of sweet and tender meat at the end. And they are just begging to be grilled.

Most meat counters stock lamb loin chops, which are tasty, but the bone to meat ratio is too high for my liking. Instead, I purchase racks of lamb, preferably from New Zealand or Australia, and cut my own chops from the racks. Each rack will have 7 to 8 bones, and most racks are packaged “Frenched.” It’s a fancy term that means that the rib bones are cleaned and exposed. If your rack is not Frenched, most butchers will do it for you.

Buying a whole rack and cutting them into chops just before grilling ensures the meat is fresh, pink and pristine. Plus, this lets me choose to cut them in double-bone or single-bone portions. If I am serving the lamb as the main course, I generally cut one rack into four double-bone portions. If I am serving them with cocktails or at a more formal affair, I cut them into single bones and they become easy-to-eat finger food.

Once you decide how you want to cut the rack, you need to decide how to flavor the chops. The natural smokiness of the grill and the richness of the lamb is such a good pairing that often I season the chops simply with olive oil, salt and pepper. But if you really want to treat your friends and family, try a sweet-and-spicy barbecue rub.

I am talking about the kind of rub that generally is used for chicken wings or pork ribs. The unexpected combination of sweet and hot spices rich with a touch of cumin and garlic — as well as three kinds of sugar — is perfect for lamb chops. It’s also great for Father’s Day! It’s a quick



AP Photo/Matthew Mead

Sweet and spicy grilled lamb chops.

SWEET-AND-SPICY GRILLED LAMB CHOPS

If you have a stovetop smoker, these are dynamite smoked over cherry wood for about 7 minutes or until medium rare.

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 4

- 2 racks of lamb, Frenched (bone ends trimmed of meat), each rack about 1 1/2 pounds
- Olive oil
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated white sugar
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon ancho chili powder
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard

Heat the grill to medium. Be certain the grill grates are very clean.

Use paper towels to pat dry the racks of lamb. One at a time, place each rack on a

cutting board and cut through at every bone to create chops, using the bones as a guide. From each rack, you will get 7 to 8 thin chops with 1 bone each, about 2/3-inch thick. Brush each chop all over with olive oil.

To make the rub, in a small bowl, mix together all 3 sugars, the salt, both chili powders, the cumin, cayenne, garlic powder and mustard. Place the rub on a dinner plate and drag each chop through it to coat on all sides. Pat the rub into the meat so that it sticks.

When the grill is ready, arrange the chops on the grates and cook, with the grill covered, for 2 to 3 minutes per side for medium rare. Cook longer if you prefer your meat more done.

Remove the chops from the grill and place on a clean platter. Let the chops rest for 5 minutes before serving. Serve with lots of paper towels and let people eat with their hands.

Nutrition information per serving: 530 calories; 200 calories from fat (38 percent of total calories); 23 g fat (8 g saturated); 0 g trans fats; 120 mg cholesterol; 3,150 mg sodium; 43 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 40 g sugar; 38 g protein.

lamb rib fix everyone will love.

Just note that I go heavy on the rub in this recipe. This isn’t a time to season lightly. Dads like flavors big and bold, and this rub delivers. But

don’t fear the rub. The sugars mellow out the heat and make a natural glaze for the lamb when you grill them quickly on both sides.

Elizabeth Karmel is a

barbecue and Southern foods expert. She is the chef and pitmaster at online retailer CarolinaCueToGo.com and author of three books, including “Taming the Flame.”

Moonshine continues to permeate Tennessee culture

By LANCE COLEMAN
Knoxville News Sentinel

GATLINBURG, Tenn. — The city’s first jar of legal moonshine was sold July 3, 2010.

Some saw the moment as a salute to independence, a shedding of antiquated laws that kept the region from telling an important part of its history.

For others, that first sale marked a potential shadow that could hang over the image of the tourism-dependent city.

In the five years since Ole Smoky Moonshine Distillery opened in downtown Gatlinburg, three more companies have jumped onto the liquor wagon: Davy Crockett’s Tennessee Whiskey (owned by Gatlinburg Barrelhouse) in 2011 and Sugarlands Distillery and Doc Collier Moonshine in 2014.

Moonshine has long been a part of the Appalachian culture and continues to play a role that appears to be growing.

Gatlinburg’s city manager recalls how in early 2010 the city was approached by the founders of Ole Smoky Moonshine about applying to open a distillery. Soon she would have talks with the city attorney to fully understand the new state law that eased restrictions on distilleries.

In February 2013, Gatlinburg’s city commission passed ordinances in an attempt to regulate the distilleries. Soon after they were nullified.

Now one restaurant in Gatlinburg has even created a menu featuring moonshine in foods and beverages.

The General Assembly passed legislation in 2009 that made distilleries legal in 41 Tennessee counties, including Sevier. Whiskey production previously had been restricted to Moore, Coffee and Lincoln counties in Southeast Tennessee, home to the Jack Daniel’s, George Dickel and Prich-



Adam Lau/Knoxville News Sentinel via AP

In this April 16 photo, Brittany Ogle pours moonshine samples for customers at Ole Smoky Distillery in Gatlinburg, Tenn. After the passage of legislation in 2009 that made distilleries legal in 41 Tennessee counties, the first legal moonshine distillery in Gatlinburg opened in July 2010.

ard’s distilleries.

The result has been increased tourism business in Gatlinburg, state Sen. Doug Overbey said.

“I think it has been a plus from an economic standpoint and tax revenue standpoint,” he said.

Overbey said he realizes there are concerns the distilleries, which offer free tastings to patrons, could hurt the town’s image.

“I think Gatlinburg is still viewed as a family-friendly place. I’ve driven down the Parkway in the past two weeks, and you see a lot of families strolling along the sidewalks,” he said.

Joe Baker, one of the owners of Ole Smoky, says he started the distillery in part to give tourists in Gatlinburg a taste of the heritage of the Smoky Mountains.

“I saw an opportunity to share a bit of our culture and heritage with tourists who came to Gatlinburg,” Baker said.

Although the idea might seem popular now, Baker and partners Cory Cottongim and Tony Breeden weren’t so certain when they set about getting federal and state permits to open Ole Smoky.

“I remember it was stressful. We were running out of money. It was getting close. We were losing lots of sleep worrying about when we would open,” Baker said. “In June of 2010, we got our state license to open. We had no idea it would be as popular as it was. That is how it played out those first few months.”

The trio opened the distillery in a 2,500-square-foot facility in downtown Gatlinburg and sold their first jar of moonshine soon after.

“Fast forward five years and we operate in about 80,000 square feet of space. We have facilities in Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, Pittman Center and warehouses throughout Sevier County,” Baker said.

The product now is sold in all 50 states and 30 countries.

“Not in my wildest dreams ... I didn’t think what we created would be something that so many other people would see and want to do,” Baker said. “That was the interesting thing. When something is successful, I think folks generally want to try to emulate it.”

Information from: Knoxville News Sentinel, <http://www.knoxnews.com>



Adam Lau/Knoxville News Sentinel via AP

In this April 16 photo, Shane Keatts, left, Daniel Westfall, and Shannon Kaiser sample moonshine at Sugarlands Distilling Company in Gatlinburg, Tenn.



This May 17 photo shows a shell of a building with the sky visible behind it in downtown Havana, Cuba.

Local rhythms and tourist sites in Old Havana

By BETH J. HARPAZ
AP Travel Editor

HAVANA — In some destinations, tourist areas are located far from the rhythms of everyday life. But visitors who wander through Old Havana — Habana Vieja, as locals call it — can’t help but get a sense of how ordinary Cubans live.

You’ll see uniformed school children, street vendors selling colorful fruits and peppers from carts, clotheslines hung from patios, and small dogs sunning themselves on sidewalks. There are lines at government-run offices for phone service and banking, and bicycle taxis ferrying passengers through the narrow streets. You might hear a rooster crow, a caged songbird, salsa music or the engine of an old car roaring as it trundles past. Watch out for pipes jutting from windows: Water may pour out from housework being done inside.

Nearly every street seems to have a sign attesting to something of cultural or historic significance. O’Reilly Street, for example, named for an Irishman who became a leader in the Spanish colonies and married into a prominent Cuban family, bears a plaque with a rather poetic allusion to the histories of Ireland and Cuba: “Two island peoples in the same sea of struggle and hope.”

Many buildings are terribly rundown. It’s not unusual to see the sky through a roofless stone facade or piles of rubble in the street. But other sites have been beautifully restored, especially around the squares in the eastern half of the neighborhood bordering the water. Spend a few hours walking through Plaza Vieja, Plaza de Armas, Plaza San Francisco and Cathedral Square. Many museums and other attractions are located here, including the Museum of Rum, which offers visitors a swig at the end of the tour, and the Ambos Mundos Hotel, which has an excellent short tour of a room where Ernest Hemingway lived and wrote.

Another cluster of major attractions is located in the western half of the neighborhood, near the Prado or Paseo de Marti, a boulevard that divides Old Havana from Central Havana. The Prado itself is worth a stroll, especially on Sundays when it hosts an outdoor art market. Adjacent to the Prado is the Parque Central (Central Park), home to a statue of revolutionary hero Jose Marti. A block over, between Agramonte and Avenida de Las Misiones (Belgica), you’ll find the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, with extraordinary collections of Cuban art in one building and international art in another, and the Museo de la Revolucion, with a tank and the famous boat “Granma” used by Fidel Castro outdoors and a wall of cartoons inside called “Cretins’ Corner” mocking American presidents Ronald Reagan and both George Bushes.

Watch out for hustlers near the Parque Central. Resist all invitations from overly friendly strangers who invite you to a bar or to buy cigars. But if you need a drink, choices abound, including a trio of historic spots. Hemingway frequented El Floridita (located at Obispo No. 557) and La Bogueyita del Medio (Empedrado No. 207), while Sloppy Joe’s, where the messy ground beef concoction supposedly was invented, was a setting for the film “Our Man in Havana,” based on the Graham Greene novel about a bumbling spy.

But more enjoyable than the tourist crowds and watery mojitos at La Bodeguita are the relaxed outdoor cafes in the old squares on the other side of Habana Vieja. Nothing is lovelier than sipping a Cristal beer in Plaza San Francisco or Plaza Vieja in early evening, when the day’s heat dissipates and sweet sounds from a three-piece band playing “Guantanamera” drift across the square.



AP Photo/Franklin Reyes, File

In this Dec. 3, 2013 photo, a self-employed fruit and vegetable vendor waits for customers in the street in Havana, Cuba.



AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa, File

This March 1, 2013 file photo shows a worker selecting cigars at the H. Upmann cigar factory in Havana, Cuba.