



Preparing and Cooking

Lamb 101: Cuts

With just a few simple tips, you'll be well on your way to a wholesome, flavor-rich meal!

CUTS

There are five major cuts of lamb available in the U.S.: shoulder, rack, shank, loin and leg. Most lamb is sold in supermarkets with fat trimmed to 1/4 or 1/8 inch. You can trim this thin layer of remaining fat before or after cooking.

1. LEG OF LAMB

The classic leg of lamb comes from the hind quarter, is the most versatile cut, and also one of the most economical. Providing lots of cooking options, leg of lamb can be butterflied, cubed (for kabobs), or cut into sirloin chops or steaks. Bone-in leg of lamb makes an impressive dish for a celebratory meal.

2. LAMB LOIN

The loin of lamb comes from the middle, lower section of the rear quarter. It is usually divided into loin chops, little jewels which are basically small, perfectly-portioned T-bone steaks.

3. LAMB SHOULDER

The shoulder of the lamb, derived from the forequarter, is an economical cut and it often cut into shoulder chops. It's great for roasting or for use in hearty stews.

Ground Lamb

Ground lamb is typically made from the shoulder and is incredibly moist and flavorful. Ground lamb is delicious in meatloaf, shepherd's pie, tacos, casseroles, stews, or lamb burgers.

4. RACK OF LAMB

The iconic rack of lamb comes from the front/middle section. Rib chops are individual or double chops cut from the rack. A rack of lamb can also be frenched, which is the removal of fat and tissue between the bones.

5. LAMB SHANKS

Mouthwatering when braised or slow-cooked, the lamb shanks come from the foreshanks and hindshanks.

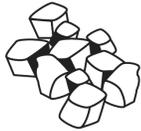
Fresh Lamb



Fresh lamb should be stored in the refrigerator or frozen immediately after purchasing.



REFRIGERATE AT 40°F



GROUND LAMB, STEW MEAT
use within 1-2 days



LAMB CHOPS, ROASTS, STEAKS
use within 3-5 days



FREEZE AT 0°F

Lamb can be frozen in its original package or re-packaged in an air-tight freezer wrap or bag.

GROUND LAMB, STEW MEAT
use within 3-4 months

LAMB CHOPS, ROASTS, STEAKS
use within 6-9 months

Frozen Lamb



FREEZE AT 0°F

After thawing in the refrigerator, it is okay to re-freeze lamb without cooking it first.

GROUND LAMB, STEW MEAT
use within 1-2 days

LAMB CHOPS, ROASTS, STEAKS
use within 3-5 days



THAW WITH COLD WATER

Leave frozen in its package, make sure its air-tight.

Keep the lamb submerged in cold water, change it every 30 min. to continue thawing.

After thawing in cold water, plan to cook immediately. It should not be re-frozen unless cooked first.



THAW IN THE MICROWAVE

After thawing in the microwave, plan to cook immediately. It should not be re-frozen unless it is cooked first.

🌡 Medium Rare 145°F

🌡 Medium 160°F

🌡 Well Done 170°F

Lamb 101: Preparing

Whether you buy your lamb fresh, frozen or cooked, preparations are simple and take little time.

FRESH LAMB

- Fresh lamb should be stored in the refrigerator or frozen immediately after purchasing.
- Ground lamb or stew meat should be used within 1 to 2 days.
- Lamb chops, roasts and steaks should be used within 3 to 5 days.

FREEZE

- Lamb can be frozen in its original packaging or repackaged.
- If you plan to freeze lamb for long periods of time, be sure to wrap the original packaging with airtight freezer wrap or place in an airtight freezer bag to prevent “freezer burn.”
- To maintain optimum quality, frozen lamb roasts, steaks, and chops should be used within 6 to 9 months and ground lamb within 3 to 4 months.

FROZEN LAMB

There are three ways to thaw frozen lamb safely: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave.

In The Refrigerator

Once frozen lamb has thawed in the refrigerator, roasts, steaks and chops can be stored safely in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days and ground lamb will be safe for 1 to 2 days. If you decide not to use it during this time period, you may refreeze lamb without cooking it first.

In Cold Water

When thawing in cold water, leave frozen lamb in its packaging, making sure it is air tight. If not, transfer it to a leak-proof bag. Keep the lamb submerged in cold water, changing it every 30 minutes to continue thawing. Plan to cook it immediately. It should not be re-frozen unless cooked first.

In The Microwave

As with the cold water method, when frozen lamb is thawed in the microwave, it must be cooked immediately. It should not be re-frozen unless cooked first.

COOKED LAMB

- Cooked lamb from take-out should be hot when bought.
- Be sure to use it within 2 hours (or 1 hour if the air temperature is above 90°F).
- Otherwise, refrigerate it at 40°F or below in shallow, covered containers and eat within 3 to 4 days cold or reheated to 165°F.
- Prepared lamb can also be safely frozen and should be eaten within 2 to 3 months for best quality.

Lamb 101: Cooking

Lamb is a versatile protein choice for weeknight family meals or dinner parties because it hits all the high notes of what nourishing meals encompass: a delicious, good-for-you protein that is convenient and offers exciting meal possibilities. Foodies rejoice!

Lamb is easy to cook—it's just as simple as cooking other meats and lamb has a depth of flavor that is unmatched.

To ensure lamb remains safe throughout cooking, the USDA recommends:

- ✓ cooking lamb patties and ground lamb mixtures, such as meat loaf, to a minimum internal temperature of 160°F as measured on a food thermometer.
- ✓ cooking roasts, steaks, and chops to 145°F (medium rare), 160°F (medium), or 170°F (well done).

For approximate cooking times, visit the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service's [Lamb from Farm to Table Fact Sheet](#).

Quick Tips for Cooking Lamb by Chef Amy Riolo

- If you need a meal on the dinner table fast, choose lamb kabob, rib, and deboned leg of lamb—cuts which can be grilled in minutes!
- Aromatics are lambs' best friends. Onions, garlic, spices, and lemon juice enhance the natural sweet flavor in lamb.
- Marinades make lamb meat even more succulent and quick to cook.
- Sauces and dips like tahini, tzatziki, chutneys, and pomegranate dressing make lamb even more enticing for first-timers!
- For those who really dislike lamb, the combination of garlic and mint will change their opinion forever! For lamb roasts, try making slits in lamb meat and inserting pieces of garlic cloves. Rub meat with olive oil and dried mint before roasting.
- Lamb should be cooked on high heat for short amount of time (such as grilling kabobs, ribs, thinly slice leg meat) or roasted, braised, or stewed and simmered at low temperatures for long periods of time (roasts, shanks, etc).
- Lamb is the perfect substitute to add life to your usual beef, veal, and pork dishes.