



Grilled Lamb with Rosemary, Garlic and Balsamic Vinegar

One of the great joys of living in Napa Valley is that many of my favorite herbs grow year round. For much of the year, I can walk out to the garden and harvest a mixed bouquet whenever the mood strikes. Such luxury! Rosemary is especially prolific and some of the small plants I planted when I first moved here six years ago are now about waist height and have encroached on everything that was formerly in their path.

My husband Jim and I love to grill lamb (I do the prep; he does the grilling), and even though we've tried numerous recipes, this is still our favorite. It's best to start marinating the meat the night before, but if time doesn't permit, start early on the day you intend to cook so the lamb has a chance to absorb all the wonderful flavors of the marinade. Then, let meat return to room temperature before you place it on the grill. (As a general rule, it's best to allow anything destined for the grill to get to room temperature before cooking.)

I like to serve this with roasted small potatoes, roasted red onions, sautéed chard or spinach and one or two briefly boiled or steamed vegetables such as green beans or asparagus.

1	boned and butterflied leg of lamb (about 4 to 5 lb)
	Good-quality olive oil
	Salt and freshly ground pepper
Several sprigs	fresh rosemary, finely chopped
5 or 6	cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/4 cup (approx.)	balsamic vinegar

Rub lamb all over with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Then rub all over with rosemary and garlic and place in large shallow dish for marinating. Drizzle all over with balsamic vinegar and rub all marinating ingredients into meat with your hand until everything is evenly coated. (Use just enough balsamic vinegar to flavor the meat; there shouldn't be so much that it pools in the bottom of the marinating dish.) Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 24 hours; turn meat over once or twice while marinating. Remove from fridge a few hours before cooking

Place lamb on grill over medium-high heat and grill for about 15 to 18 minutes per side or to desired doneness. Let rest about 10 minutes before slicing. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper and serve.

Makes about 6 servings.

Jim White: I like the heartier reds to complement this grilled lamb and what's better than the "Big Juicies," Napa Valley Cabs?

From our own ilovenapa.com portfolio, I love the following (they wouldn't be in the portfolio if I didn't love them!): Arns, Brookdale, Farella-Park, Hollywood & Vine Cellars, Ilsley Vineyard, Judd's Hill, Long Vineyards, Phelan Vineyard, Rafael, Regusci Winery, Sorensen, Twenty Bench, and Vinoce. But you could also serve the Merlots from Crane Family Vineyards or Strata Vineyards and be equally satisfied. The same goes for the stunning Cab Franc-rich red from Vinoce.

Every one of these delicious wines will complement Carol's grilled lamb. And yours, too!