

Stocks & Sauces – A Must For Meat

The soul of any meat dish is its accompanying sauce and the heart of a good sauce is the stock that forms its base. Paul Cosgrave visited accomplished Springwood chef, Betty Reynolds, who introduces her superb ‘Lamb Fillet Off The Rack’. It’s cooked and served in the Adriatic style of her native Croatia, and serves four.

Betty’s Lamb Fillet is served with creamed spinach, potato croquettes and a sauce of stock, red wine and herbs. The quality of the stock is the essential component for a fine sauce that adds flavour and texture to any meat dish.

“You can use commercial stocks if you want to”, says Betty, “and you’ll get some sort of a result. But if you can take the time to make your own stock, every dish you create will be richer and tastier”.

Stock

You can make a red meat stock with mixed beef and lamb bones; or for this particular recipe ask your butcher for four racks of eight, with each rack de-boned in one piece to produce four fillets, and keep the bones. Heat 2 knobs of butter and 1 – 1½ cups of oil in a large pan. Add the bones or some shoulder offcuts, 3 coarsely chopped celery sticks and leaves, 2 onions, 2 carrots, ½ a turnip and ½ a leek. Drop in some rock salt and peppercorns, 6 bay leaves, 3 flattened garlic cloves, fresh herbs to your taste (parsley/thyme/basil/mint/oregano, with stalks). Stir continuously for 20 minutes over a full heat until the mixture is well browned. After it starts browning, reduce the heat a little.

Add 1 cup of red wine and boil it off before adding 2 chopped tomatoes. Fill the pan with water and simmer for five hours, replacing the water if it steams off. Strain the stock in a sieve and discard remaining solids. Refrigerate the liquid until set, skim off the fat and re-boil for ten minutes to reduce further. You’ll get about 1.5 litres of stock. Cool and freeze in ‘cup’ sized quantities. Use chicken wings or drumsticks for a similar chicken stock.

**“... Australia was starting
to move past steak & eggs ...”**

Cream Spinach

Steam and then finely chop 2 large bunches of silver beet leaves. Place 1 heaped Tsp of ghee butter and 2 Tsps of flour in a pan. Heat gently, mixing a paste. Add the spinach with salt, pepper, garlic and a little more butter if needed. Add 2 Tsps of fresh unthickened cream, stir and keep warm.

Croquettes

Steam and mash 4 large potatoes. Stir in finely chopped onion or chives with fresh herbs (parsley or basil are nice). Add salt, pepper, garlic and 2 egg yolks. Mix well and

then roll small pieces lightly in plain flour. Coat in beaten egg mix, crumb and deep fry for thirty seconds.

Meat & Sauce

Prepare 2 generous handfuls of finely chopped & mixed parsley, mint and rosemary (in 45/45/10 proportions). Cover the pan base in ½ and ½ butter and oil and fry the unseasoned fillets on a high heat. Fry for longer on the first side and turn the meat when the edges are half browned. Keep the centre underdone and rest when cooked. Now, add 1 cup red wine or port to the pan with 1 Tsp of balsamic vinegar. Boil off most of the wine and add the chopped herbs. Lastly, add ¾ cup stock and stir all the ingredients well over a medium heat for 2-3 minutes.

To serve

Slice the fillets, place the spinach on the centre of the plate and crown with the lamb, as pictured, with the croquettes around the edge. Drizzle the sauce around the front edge so that the meat sits down into it. Garnish with mint. Dobar Apetit & Nazdravlje!

Our Chef

Betty came to Australia in 1964 and over thirty years established herself as one of Sydney's finest European chefs, working in the Blues Point Cafe and many clubs and restaurants. She owned two, *The Kornat* in Fairfield and *Ridge Street Brasserie* in North Sydney. "My mother was a wonderful cook and we learned cooking and all the meat cuts in school, in what was then Yugoslavia. So I brought lots of knowledge with me and Australia was just beginning to move past the steak and eggs stage and accept European cuisine.

"But I was fortunate in many of my restaurants to develop my own style in recipes from Italy, Germany, Hungary, France and The Ukraine. Working with customers' feedback was both good business and a useful learning tool". Betty is writing a book which will include many of her classic European recipes.

Reader Showcase

If you have a favourite recipe or cooking style, or you know someone who does, let us know. We're always looking for great local chefs and recipes to showcase in Wonderland's Food & Dining feature – enquiry.bmwonder@ruralpress.com.