

## LEG OF LAMB WITH TOMATOES AND GARLIC (*The Gourmet Cookbook*)

*Serves 8     Active time: 45 minutes     Start to finish: 2 ¾ hours*

Rural French home cooks have a genius for creating wonderful food with a few good ingredients. This recipe comes from the kitchen of Nathalie Waag, who at one time ran a small cooking school in her Provençal farmhouse. The few fortunate guests got to spend several days shopping and cooking with her. The classic flavors of the Provence pantry – tomatoes, garlic, rosemary, olive oil - are supporting players for the lamb. As the dish cooks, the tomatoes melt down into a sauce flavored with the herbs and the meat's own juices, and the whole heads of garlic sweeten and mellow. Serve each guest a head of garlic, so he or she can squeeze the flesh out of the skin and spread it on the lamb or on bread.

28- to 32-ounce can of whole plum tomatoes in juice, coarsely chopped with juice  
1 (6 to 8 pound) leg of lamb, aitchbone removed by butcher and trimmed  
8 heads of garlic, papery outer skin discarded  
3 fresh rosemary sprigs or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crumbled  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
4 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, or as needed  
Special Equipment: an instant-read thermometer or substitute with a probe thermometer.

Put a rack in middle of oven and preheat oven to 450°F.

Arrange tomatoes in a 17 ½ -by-12 inch roasting pan and place lamb on top. Arrange garlic around lamb. Lay rosemary sprigs on lamb (or sprinkle with dried rosemary), then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Drizzle with 2 Tablespoons oil.

Roast lamb for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and continue roasting lamb, basting garlic with some of remaining 2 Tablespoons oil every 20 minutes to keep it from drying out, until thermometer inserted into thickest part of lamb (without touching bone) registers 135°F for medium-rare; 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours or more.