



Lamb shanks with roasted onions is a homey dish like the ones Sol Danino would serve to her family for Rosh Hashana when they lived on a collective farm in Israel. **ZBISNEW BZDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE; PHOTOS, MARK GRAHAM/FOOD STYLING**

# Lamb a tradition at Rosh Hashana

Moroccan family's custom born of necessity in Israel

By PEGGY WOLFF | Chicago Tribune

A fresh approach to Rosh Hashana (the observance begins at sundown Sept. 20) brings lamb to the table, a Sephardic family custom from Shehana (Shohav) Mor and her older brother Yoram Danino, who now live in Skokie. They were born and raised in Israel on Moshav Mivritan, a collective farm where their parents, Sol and Yosef Danino, had found a safe home a long way from the anti-Semitism and hatred from Arab neighbors in their native Morocco.

Why lamb? "That's what was there, lamb and goats, raised by Arabs in nearby Gaza," said Sol Danino. "We would get a few of them at 2 to 3 weeks old, mix powdered milk with water, feed them through a nipple slipped on top of a beer bottle."

When the young were weaned, Yoram Danino's job was to walk them on a long

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rope, then tie the animals to a stake he put in the weeds. Before leaving for school, he filled a bucket of water, leaving the animals to walk around, still tied to the post.

Over many phone calls to her mother, Sol, in Israel, Mor translated their conversations for me. "Lamb was the cheapest way to feed a family and get as much meat as possible. It was nothing to do with the Torah," referring to the Book of Genesis and the binding of Isaac, a story read on Rosh Hashana about Abraham's intended sacrifice of his son. A ram caught in a thicket appeared, and it was sacrificed instead.

Ashkenazim in America do cook lamb for Rosh Hashana, but it depends on their tradition, explained Joan Nathan, the doyenne of worldwide Jewish cooking, in an email. "Many Conservative and Orthodox Jews won't cook lamb, especially roast lamb, as it reminds them of the destruction of the first temple. However, it is not a law, and loads of Jews, even Conservative ones, are now making it for the holidays."

"The shochet (rabbi) — he always looked like an old man to me," said Danino as he reconstructed the killing of the lamb, a scene he had witnessed more than 50 times.

You might cringe all the way through each beat of a kosher kill, and I probably did, yet Danino was unfazed, and talked about his appetite — for the intestines or a barbecued tail. His eyes widened. "A big round tail!"

"And full of fat," his sister Mor chimed

in. "The most delicious dish, it's called the ... the ..." He faltered for the English translation. Knowing they ate the whole animal, I offered up "stomach."

"Yes! Stomach! Where all the food they just ate sits." Danino was excited. Again, Mor's words caught other details. "But it's washed out in water before you eat it."

On the eve of Rosh Hashana, they had fish first, then bone-in lamb, their version of osso buco, served with rice and small potatoes. For lunch the next day, the lamb was barbecued and served with couscous made from scratch.

Although a lamb's tail might not make it to your holiday table this year, perhaps the shanks would offer a delicious change from brisket?

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This beet and orange salad with pistachios comes from Joan Nathan's "King Solomon's Table." She likes to serve it at Rosh Hashana. "You are supposed to serve at least seven vegetables for the new year, including beets," she writes. **ZBISNEW BZDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS, MARK GRAHAM/FOOD STYLING**

## Moroccan beet and orange salad

**Prep:** 1 hour, plus resting time **Cook:** 1 hour **Makes:** 8 to 10 servings

This tasty side dish from Joan Nathan's latest cookbook, "King Solomon's Table" is a bright and colorful salad she loves to serve at Rosh Hashana. "According to the Gemara," Nathan writes, a component of the Talmud written in the year 200, "you are supposed to serve at least seven vegetables for the new year, including beets." If you can find the candy-striped Italian Chiggia beets, they are beautiful and don't bleed red.

- 6 to 8 medium beets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 to 3 navel oranges
- 2 cloves of lemon
- 2 juicy garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin, or to taste
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 bunch fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped green pistachios

1 Heat oven to 350 degrees. Rinse the beets, rub them with the olive oil, wrap them in foil and put them on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast them until tender when poked with a fork, about 1 hour. Remove from oven and allow to cool. When cool enough to handle, peel the beets and cut into bite-size pieces.

2 With a sharp knife, cut off the tops and bottoms of the oranges. Slice off the peel and the white pith, and cut in between the white membranes to extract individual segments.

3 In a small bowl, mix the lemon juice, garlic, cumin, and salt and pepper to taste. Whisk in the olive oil, then toss with the beets. Let sit for a few hours at room temperature. Just before serving, add the orange segments, and sprinkle with the parsley and pistachios for color.

**Nutrition information per serving (for 10 servings):** 118 calories, 9 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 9 g carbohydrates, 6 g sugar, 2 g protein, 158 mg sodium, 2 g fiber

## Tinzia (aka tinziya)

**Prep:** 20 minutes **Cook:** 40 minutes **Makes:** 8 to 10 servings

Shoofy Mor makes this side dish at Rosh Hashana to serve with lamb in Israel. It's a very popular sweet dish served at other celebrations, like weddings.

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 large or 3 medium onions, sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup dried figs
- 1 cup prunes
- 3 cup dried apricots
- 1/2 cup dark raisins
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sweet red dessert wine, such as port
- 1 cup sliced, blanched almonds



Tinzia is a dish of dried fruit. In this case figs, prunes, apricots and raisins, seasoned with spices and simmered until tender and flavorful.

1 Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat, about 2 minutes. Add the onions, cook, stirring until they become translucent, about 2 minutes.

2 Add the salt, black pepper, turmeric, cinnamon and nutmeg; cook, stirring, 1 minute. Stir in the figs, prunes, apricots and both kinds of raisins. Cook and stir, about 2 minutes. Add the brown sugar and wine; heat to a boil. Lower the heat to a simmer, cover the pan and cook until the liquid is mostly evaporated and the fruit is soft, 30 minutes.

3 Serve at room temperature, sprinkled with the almonds.

**Nutrition information per serving (for 10 servings):** 290 calories, 11 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 50 g carbohydrates, 3 g sugar, 5 g protein, 242 mg sodium, 6 g fiber

## Moroccan-style lamb shanks

**Prep:** 40 minutes **Cook:** 2 hours, 30 minutes **Makes:** 6 servings

When the family lived in Israel, Sol Danino served lamb for the first night of Rosh Hashana, *Erev Chag*, and for lunch the following day. Since there was no freezer, part of the animal was used, providing enough meat for the two-day holiday, intestines for casing some ground meat pieces, internal organs such as the heart and liver, and skin for a drum called *darbuka*.

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 6 lamb shanks, about 14 ounces each, bone-in, don't trim fat
- Salt to taste
- 6 large onions, sliced
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1/2 tablespoon turmeric
- 1/2 tablespoon white pepper
- 3 tablespoons granulated beef bouillon or 9 instant beef bouillon cubes
- 1/2 cup blanched, sliced almonds without skins

1 Heat oven to 375 degrees. Place a wide skillet on medium-high heat: Coat the bottom with the oil. Season the lamb shanks generously with salt. In two batches, sear both sides of the lamb shanks, 3-5 minutes per side.

2 Transfer the meat to a platter, leaving the liquid in the pan; cook the onions on medium until golden brown, about 18 minutes.

3 Add the brown sugar, spices and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a small bowl; stir the mixture into the onions; add the beef bouillon. Mix well.

4 Using two ungreased baking pans, layer each in this order: a thin layer of onions on the bottom, then lamb shanks, then top with more onions. Cover with foil.

5 In the oven until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle over the shanks before placing in the oven until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle over the shanks before placing in the oven until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle over the shanks before placing in the oven until lightly browned, about 3 minutes.

**Nutrition information per serving (for 10 servings):** 601 calories, 27 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 181 mg cholesterol, 26 g carbohydrates, 13 g sugar, 62 g protein, 1,406 mg sodium, 4 g fiber

### Variation: Braising

In the test kitchen, we also had good results braising the lamb. To do so, in step 4, use 2 cups reduced-sodium beef broth instead of the bouillon. Pour the onion mixture into a large Dutch oven. Add the lamb shanks. Bake, covered, at 300 degrees until lamb is tender, about 2 1/2 hours.