

Published March 30th, 2022

Pickled onions and feta perfectly complement pulled lamb ragu

By Susie Iventosch



Pulled Lamb Ragu Flatbread Photos Susie Iventosch

One Sunday last year, I was taking a stroll and came across a new restaurant near our house. After perusing the menu, I immediately ordered the pulled lamb sandwich that caught my eye. I'd never really had "pulled" lamb, although I've tried plenty of pulled pork and pulled chicken sandwiches - usually served barbecue style. Being a lamb lover, this was a hard one to resist. Rich and meaty, the flavor of this succulent and aromatic lamb was perfectly complemented by the pickled onions and feta cheese served with it! It was so good and I knew I'd have to figure out how to make it. The way I ended up slow-cooking the meat with jalapenos, shallots, garlic and seasoned with cumin, it turned out more like lamb ragu. In the end we just love it this way served over flat bread and topped with crumbled feta, toasted just until the cheese begins to brown and the sandwich is hot. Sometimes we spread the flat bread first with Boursin Garlic & Fine Herbs cheese before adding the meat. So delicious! The lamb slow cooks for out 5 hours,

so you have plenty of time to enjoy the amazing aroma as it cooks until perfectly "fall off the bone" tender.

The nice thing about this dish is that you can prepare the lamb and gravy ahead of time and freeze them either together or separately until you're ready to serve it. We like to make the sauce right when we shred the meat, but you can also save the braising liquid in the freezer and make the sauce at a later time. Any amount of work you can do ahead always makes it easier when you go to get dinner ready.

The lamb ragu is also delicious tossed with pappardelle for a hearty pasta dinner!

Pulled Lamb Ragu Flat Bread

(Serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

Lamb

- 3 lbs. lamb shoulder
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 large shallots, chopped
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 2 jalapenos, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Sandwiches

- 4 pieces of naan or your favorite flat bread
- 1 round of Boursin Cheese (Garlic & Fine Herbs) - optional
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley or cilantro (for garnish)
- 1 bunch sunflower sprouts, optional (for garnish)

Ragu Gravy

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 2 tablespoons gravy flour (or sifted all-purpose flour)
- 2 cups cooking broth from lamb, skim fat off the top (or whatever you have left of the braising liquid)
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup red wine

DIRECTIONS

Lamb Ragu

Preheat oven to 285 F. Spray the bottom of a casserole dish that will hold three lamb shoulder chops laying flat with cooking spray. Evenly distribute shallots, garlic and jalapenos over the bottom of the dish.

Season lamb shoulder chops on both sides with salt, pepper, and cumin. Place them directly on top of the veggies in the casserole dish. Fill the dish with water just to cover the lamb. Wrap the dish tightly with foil.

Bake in preheated oven for 5 hours, or until the meat is done and falls off the bone. Remove from oven and cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours or overnight until the fat has congealed.

Once completely cold, remove the lamb from the refrigerator and skim off as much of the fat as possible. Transfer the lamb chops from casserole dish to a cutting board. Reserve the braising broth/liquid/gel.

Using two forks, shred the lamb and discard any bones and any extra congealed fat that is leftover. The meat can be prepared to this point and frozen or refrigerated for several days ahead of time.

Meanwhile, make the gravy.

Ragu Gravy

Heat oil in frying pan. Add shallots along with the herbs and spices and cook until the shallots are translucent and the herbs are fragrant, about 5-10 minutes over medium-low heat.

Slowly whisk in the flour and brown with the veggies for a few minutes, whisking all the while. Whisk in the reserved braising liquid along with any remaining veggies that are in the broth, and the red wine. Whisk well and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 5 minutes until slightly thickened. Add shredded lamb. Or, if you are making this ahead of time, cool completely and freeze or refrigerate until ready to use and then add the shredded lamb.

Assemble Sandwiches

Lay the flat bread out on a baking sheet. Spread the Boursin cheese over just the top side of the bread. Spoon the lamb ragu over the Boursin and top with the crumbled feta. Bake in a 400 F oven for about 8 minutes, or just until the cheese starts to brown and the lamb is heated through.

Serve with a garnish of minced parsley and/or sunflower sprouts.



Photos Susie Iventosch



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

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