

Your guide to lamb

There are many different cuts of lamb available in your local butcher or supermarket, and look out for seasonal variations as well, from tender new season spring lamb to flavoursome and mature autumn lamb.

Shopping for lamb

When shopping for joints allow 100-175g (4-6oz) raw meat per person for boneless joints and 225-350g (8-12oz) for bone-in joints, and always buy from a good retailer.

The flesh may vary in colour, due to age and pasture used for grazing. Generally, it should be bright, moist and brownish pink (not too red or bloody). The fat should be white, firm and crumbly, yet waxy.

As a guide, red meat will keep for between three and five days in the refrigerator at a temperature of between 0-4°C and always ensure you follow the 'use by' dates on packaging.

The best cuts for slow cooking

Scrag end – The bony part of the neck, cut into thick slices, often sold as stewing lamb. A flavoursome cut and when trimmed of fat ideal in soups and stews, on or off the bone.

Boned, or diced shoulder or leg – Great for stews, casseroles and curries. The leg meat will provide leaner pieces of meat, but when trimmed of excess fat the shoulder will provide slightly more flavour.

Whole, boned and rolled leg and shoulder joints – These joints are suitable for pot-roasting where the joint is pre-browned and pot-roasted slowly with vegetables, stock and fresh herbs.

Lamb shanks – A well flavoured cut, ideal for chillier evenings and perfect for slow, moist cooking until the meat literally falls off the bone.

Best end chops or cutlets – Traditionally used for Lancashire hotpot and suitable for grilling, frying and roasting too.

Chump chops – A thick chop that may be diced and used in braised or casserole dishes but also good for grilling, frying and roasting.

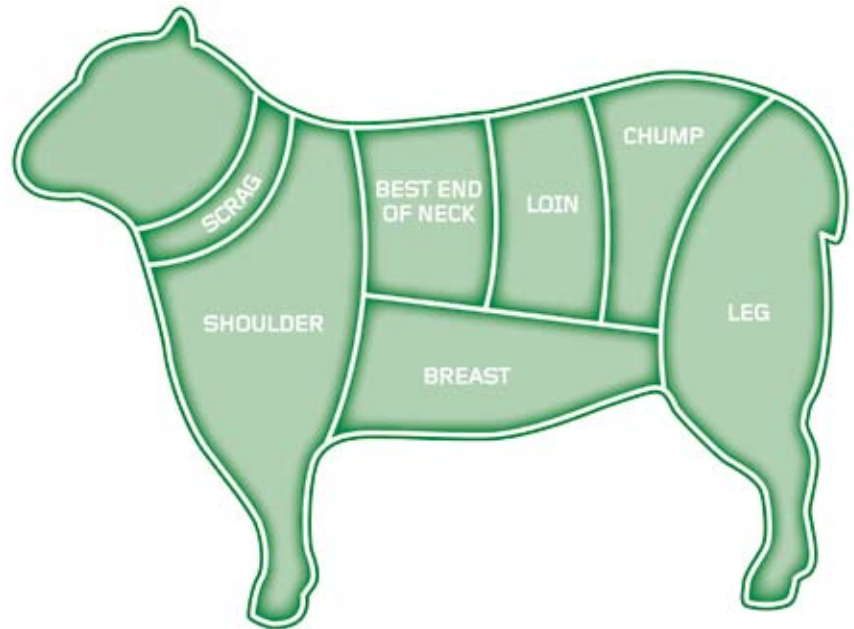
Lamb cubes – Taken from the leg and great for pies and pasties.

The best cuts for roasting

Rolled and boned shoulder – A succulent tender roasting joint, ideal for stuffing.

Rolled boneless shoulder mini joint – A smaller joint suitable for 2-3 people. Quick to cook and perfect for a mid-week supper.

Cushion of lamb – A boneless joint that's round in shape and easy to carve. Your butcher can prepare this for you.



Half shoulder – A cut that is full of flavour and sold as either blade or knuckle and a convenient small roasting joint.

*Whole shoulder** – A wonderful roasting joint from the forequarter that has a slightly sweet flavour. This cut is perfect for the barbecue too.

Whole and half leg – Prime roasting joints perfect for Sunday lunch.

Boneless rolled leg joints – Leg joints which are easy to carve and ideal for stuffing.

Best end of neck – Sometimes called rack of lamb and is extremely versatile. It has 6 or 7 small chops, making it a perfect joint to roast for 2-3 people and quick to cook. A rack is cut between the bones to produce lamb cutlets. The meat and fat is often trimmed prior to cooking. This is known as 'French' or 'larder' trimming. A Guard of Honour is made by joining together two trimmed best ends so that they face each other, fat side out, to form an arch.

Boned and rolled loin – A succulent joint that can be stuffed before roasting, or sliced into loin chops and roasted with root vegetables and fresh herbs.

Saddle of lamb – A premium roasting joint, perfect for a special occasion, which, depending on size can serve up to 8-10. Can be boned and stuffed before roasting.

The best cuts for pan-frying, grilling and griddling

*Lamb cutlets** – Taken from the best end, these require very little cooking and should be eaten slightly pink. The cooking time depends on the thickness of the cutlets.

*Shoulder steaks** – These are full of flavour although slightly fattier than other steaks or chops.

*Noisettes** – A premium cut in which the eye of the loin is completely boned out to form a fillet tied with string. This cut is beautifully tender and quick to cook.

*Valentine steaks** – A modern butterfly cut prepared from the loin with the meat of two chops.

*Barnsley chops** – Also known as crown or double chops and prepared from the saddle. Perfect for those with a hearty appetite.

*Chump chops** – These chops have less bone with a firmer texture than other cuts and a superb flavour.

*Lamb cubes** – Taken from the leg and great for kebabs.

*Leg steaks** – These are from the leaner part of the leg. Tare care when cooking to ensure maximum tenderness and flavour.

Stir-fry strips – Ideal for quick cooking. Try hot in a salad or wrap.

*All suitable for cooking on the barbecue.



mince

scrag end



rolled & boned shoulder

mini joint

cushion of lamb



whole shoulder

half shoulder
knuckle

half shoulder
blade



diced
shoulder

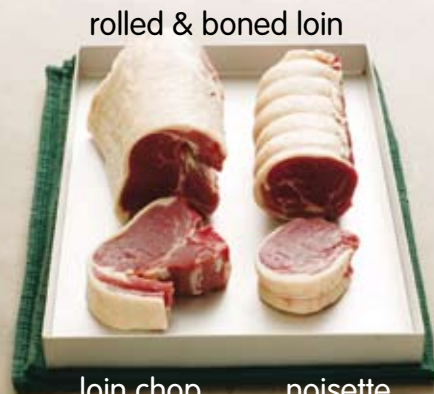
shoulder steaks



guard of
honour

best end

best end
cutlet



rolled & boned loin

loin chop

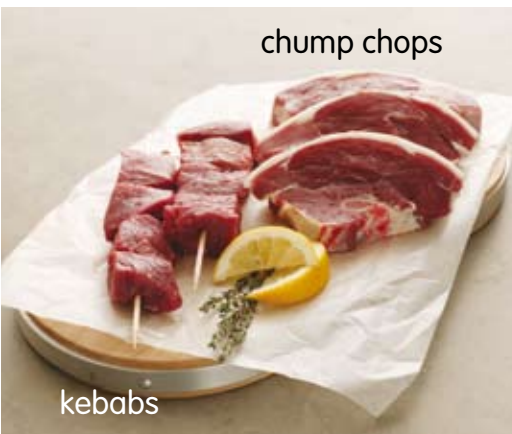
noisette



saddle

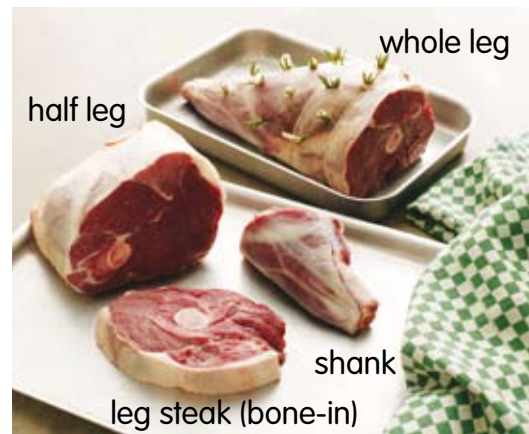
valentine steak

barnsley chop



chump chops

kebabs



whole leg

half leg

shank

leg steak (bone-in)



boneless rolled leg

boneless
mini joint

boneless steak



stir-fry strips

cubed boneless steak



kidney

liver



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