



Spice-rubbed Lamb Backstrap

This quick marinade adds real punch to any red meat. I usually serve it with instant couscous (quinoa works well too) tossed with slivered almonds, finely diced preserved lemon, chopped green olives, chives, salt and olive oil, but plain steamed rice would also be good. Asian sambal oelek has no place in this dish culturally - but it's just chilli and salt and I use it in all sorts of dishes to add a touch of heat. For a Spanish take, you could replace the fennel seeds with 3 teaspoons of hot smoked paprika.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup coriander seeds
- 3 teaspoons cumin seeds
- 1½ teaspoons fennel seeds
- 3 teaspoons salt flakes
- 1 tablespoon harissa to taste
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for pan-frying
- 3 x 200g lamb back straps

Tomato Sauce

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion, diced
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 400g canned Italian tomatoes, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sambal oelek

METHOD

1. Fry the coriander, cumin and fennel seeds in a dry frying pan for a couple of minutes until aromatic then place in a spice grinder with salt and grind to a powder. Mix with harissa and olive oil to make a paste.
2. Rub paste all over the lamb and leave to marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes or so.
3. Make the Tomato Sauce: heat olive oil in a saucepan, add onion and salt and cook for 5-10 minutes until translucent. Add tomatoes and sambal oelek, bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, heat a little oil in a frying pan, add lamb and cook for a couple of minutes each side.
5. Remove meat from the pan and set aside to rest. Meanwhile, stir tomato sauce through the cooking juices and spice paste remaining in the pan and cook for a few minutes.
6. Slice meat, arrange on a platter, top with tomato sauce and serve.