

Details and helpful hints for the 2009 Maryland Grand Lamb Cookoff

Please note these important facts:

Your recipe is your entry. It must conform to the standards below. Please proofread and re-read before submitting it. Any recipe that does NOT include:

- The words “American Lamb”
- Specific quantities for each ingredient
- Adequate description of each ingredient WITHOUT brand names
- Agreement between the ingredient list and the directions for preparation (if the instructions say: stir in oats and lemon juice, then both a quantity of oats and lemon juice must be listed in the ingredient list)
- Yield (number of servings), cooking time and temperature and all other standard features of modern recipes

-will be disqualified. Please note that all the prep time and cook time must fit within a three-hour window.

A definite trend in contemporary food is the move away from dining out and towards cooking in, even among young professionals and recent non-cooks. A plethora of cooking courses and demonstrations (some on-line) and ‘easy’ cookbooks document this trend.

Therefore, this year we are featuring Quick and Easy recipes for Maryland Lamb.

All our entries will have no more than FIVE ingredients (in addition to the lamb).

Water, salt and pepper are not included in the count.

Prep time must be 15 minutes or less.

All our recipes must be the original creation of the contestant. Take inspiration from your family traditions, favorite cookbooks or dishes you find online in recipe databases or foodie blogs, but take them another step or two. If your recipe is based on a published recipe, it must be substantially different when submitted. This means that at least two out of the five additional ingredients must be different. Changing the quantities of ingredients or cutting the salt in half are not ‘substantive’ changes.

Don’t forget the possibilities of using cuts of pre-cooked lamb (AKA: leftovers). Think about soup, appetizers or salads as entries.

Here is an example of a perfectly formatted recipe.

Lamb Contest Recipe

2 lbs. ground American Lamb

1. 3 fresh leeks, green and white parts, 8” long
2. 1 cup dried apricots
3. 1/4 cup white wine
4. ¼ cup pine nuts, toasted

- 5. 2 teaspoons ground cumin seeds
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

By hand or in your food processor, finely chop the well-cleaned leeks and apricots. Chop the pine nuts (not as finely) and add to the leeks and apricots. Mix the ground lamb and all the other ingredients lightly but thoroughly with your hands. Form forty-eight 1" meatballs and poach in salted water 5 minutes per batch at a slow boil. Yield, 8 servings, 6 meatballs per serving.
Prep time: 10 minutes with a food processor Cooking time: 5 minutes

(Please don't try this recipe. I think it would be dreadful!)

- 1 Cooking may start no early than 11AM, and all finished dishes must be turned in to the judges by 2 PM. Ribbons and prize money will be distributed, and the standings announced, at 3 PM.

2 **Mise en place**

The contestants may set up their **Mise en place** (equipment and raw ingredients) beforehand and the contest area will be made available for this purpose. Ingredients must be clean, whole/fresh as purchased. Chopping, etc. is to be done after the contest commences. This is because the cutting, measuring, mixing, etc. are the actions that the judges and audience need to see and be able to judge in the cookoff process. However, if your recipe specifies precooked lamb, for example; *1 lb roast leg of lamb, diced in ¾ inch cubes*, then you may start with your lamb already cut.

- 3 Junior contestants (under age 18) may have the help and supervision of one adult in setting up their **Mise en place**. They may also call on their adult helper, in person or by cell phone for help, reminders and encouragement during the contest, if needed. The adult helper may not cut, mix or make cooking decisions for the contestants.
- 4 Please make up one full serving on your presentation plate for a photograph, and two one-quarter sized portions for the judges.
- 5 Despite 'Samples will be available' in the old catalog and schedule, we will NOT be able to give any food cooked in the contest to the public. Selling or giving away food prepared at the contest violates the county Health Code.

Stuff you need to know:

You will be sharing a ten-foot-long table workspace with up to two other contestants, so everyone will have a bit over three feet of width in which to work. These tables are old and scarred. They will be wiped down with disinfectant spray before the contest, but you should bring a table cover or tray on which to work. If you are going to cut **any** fresh food, including your lamb, you will have to bring a non-porous cutting board or disposable cutting mat on which to put your food.

A heavy-duty 15 Amp receptacle will be mounted within easy reach on your workspace. You will not need an extension cord.

There will be a 15 x 22 inch gas grill available outside our building. Contestants will have to be staggered to share this. If you are grilling, you will be assigned a time to use the grill. Please be precise in your recipe's estimate of cooking time.

You will have to grill outside no matter what the weather. I will make every effort to supply a 10' x 10' tent fly and some kind of table (perhaps a small one) on which to rest your serving dish.