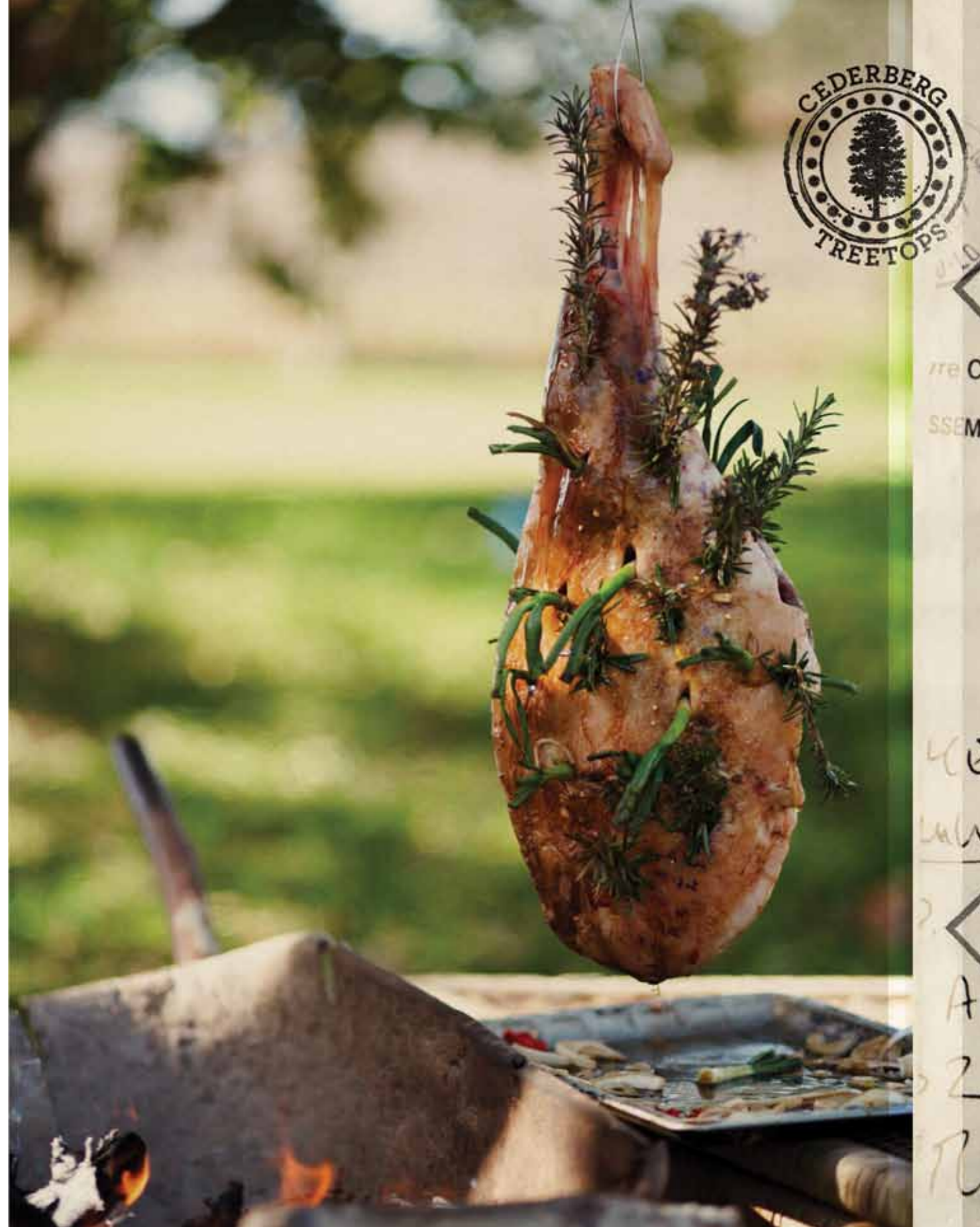


# TARZAN ROAST

★★★★★ THIS RECIPE SERVES 10 - 12 ★★★★★

*In the upper reaches of the majestic Olifants River Valley this hideaway on stilts in the middle of a poplar forest brought out the primeval male in me and I was tempted to swing from the branches and yell . . . FIRE! About two million years ago, somewhere along the southern tip of Africa, man discovered quite by chance that ripping off large hunks of meat and chucking them in the flames did startling things to the flavour. From that day forward the heat's been on and no dassie or duiker, eland or elephant or any other four-legged herbivore, wild or domestic, has escaped a roasting. We've developed a myriad of hot variations and every red-blooded male has an arsenal of braai techniques. I, too, have a few strings to my bow but once in a while I'm forced to admit that another guy's idea is a killer. This one goes to Braam Kruger in whose amazing book *Provocative Cuisine* I first discovered this primordial method - he calls it Tarzan Roast . . . and, by Jane, it rocks! You may recognise it by its ancient name - a Poacher's Roast.*





Lay the leg of lamb on its side in the baking tray and, using a small sharp knife, cut slits 3-5 cm deep at a 45 degree angle all over the lamb. Force rosemary sprigs, chilli and garlic slivers into the slits, then dip the spring onions in the oyster sauce and force them in as well - the green leaves will jut out, a bit like a porcupine! Mix together the oregano, the balance of the oyster sauce, the onions and the juice from the lemons and orange, and pour this all over the leg of lamb. Leave to marinate while you make the fire in the wheelbarrow.

**COOKING METHOD** The meat actually cooks by radiated heat and is gently smoked at the same time. I usually use orange or apple wood because of their aromatic properties and I make the fire in a wheelbarrow. This is useful because the cooking time is somewhere between 4 and 6 hours, and during that period of time Mother Nature could blow hot and cold and change her tune a number of times. But with a wheelbarrow you can adjust the position of the fire and take full advantage of the prevailing wind.

**READY TO COOK** First, slip the wire through the shank and twist it so there's no chance of the meat falling into the fire. Attach the wire to the rope with a slipknot.

**THE TREE** Once the leg is attached to the wire and the rope you need to find a nice strong branch in a tall tree from which to hang your meat. *(Be sure that it's far enough away from your house and any dry tinder. You don't want to end up chasing a runaway fire.)* Again using a slipknot attach the rope to the branch and then, between the wire and the tree, make a sheepshank knot in the rope - this way, you can adjust the height of the lamb as required. Balance the baking tray with the left over marinade on a stool and position this directly under the joint. Wheel the fire in next

to the stool and place it so that the prevailing wind is blowing towards the lamb. You should be able to hold your hand between the fire and meat for just a few seconds without burning it. If it's not hot enough chuck a couple of extra logs on the fire to really get the heat going. You can use the forked stick to push the leg closer or further from the heat. And that's it. For the next 4 to 6 hours, you need to keep basting the lamb with marinade and the fatty juices that drip into the tray. Every 10 to 15 minutes turn the meat about 45 degrees and secure its position with the forked stick.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Keep testing the heat and adding a log when necessary. Otherwise, your early evening meal could turn into a midnight feast.

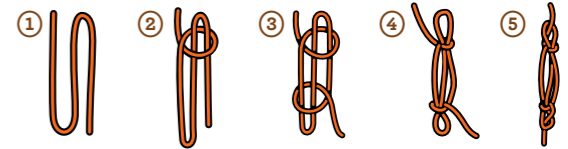
**INGREDIENTS**

- You will need**
- about a 3 ½ kg fatty leg of lamb, with the shank intact**  
- very important
- a few sprigs of rosemary**
- a couple of whole chillies**  
- as hot as you can handle
- 10-15 cloves of garlic**  
- peeled and cut in half
- 3-4 bunches of spring onions**
- ¼ cup oyster sauce**
- a handful of dried oregano**
- 2 onions - sliced**
- the juice of 2 to 3 lemons**
- the juice of 1 orange**
- ... as well as ...**
- a baking tray**
- about half a metre of galvanised wire**
- 2-3 metres of rope**
- a forked stick**
- a basting brush**
- a sharp knife**
- a small stool**
- a wheelbarrow** - useful for both braaiing and gardening
- orange wood** - any hard fruit wood will do, but do not use ordinary firewood
- an accessible branch on a tree that is not too close to your house**

**Slip Knot**



**Sheepshank Knot (ironic)**



## While you're rolling the joint and smoking it . . .

We were fortunate enough to make our manly meal in the Cederberg where there was plenty of space to let off steam, but if you're not lucky enough to be able to get out into the great outdoors don't despair, take a stab at it wherever you may be. Just remember this macho way of cooking a hefty hunk of lamb takes mega time and if you hit the jungle juice and form a laager with a lager too early things could get really hairy.

One way of avoiding this is to take some time out to get in touch with your sensitive side.

Include the ladies and absorb the bits of nature that suburbia has on offer. First up, turn on your sprinkler (*it's good for cooling off any coals that sneak out of the braai*), but just long enough to get the lawn damp enough to bring out the earthworms which will attract the birds. Then take off those boots - being kaalvoet so that the mud can squelch between your toes is essential. Now get down and do some sky gazing. Encourage your mates to join you as this is an excellent time to get your lawn weeded. I'm not prescribing total abstinence - basking while

sipping slowly from Bohemian glass goblets (*or cracking a can, if you must*) gets the mind juices flowing and leads to some beautiful banter. Be on the lookout for birdcalls, butterflies and bugs. Just don't forget to turn your meat!

After 4 hours or so of chilling, poke a skewer into the thickest section of the joint to see if it's cooked. If the juices ooze out red, it's still raw and needs more cooking; pink juices mean the meat is perfectly medium rare. When it is cooked, raise the leg or remove the heat and let it rest for ten minutes.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

*I normally carve the meat while it is still hanging up - that way, if it's a bit too rare closer to the bone, you can just drop the roast back near the heat and cook it for a bit longer. So, finally, you've got this pile of perfectly smoked lamb and a group of ravenous mates. Now what?*

### Option ① - Hands On

Grab pita bread. Slice open to make a pocket. Stuff with shredded lettuce, roughly chopped tomato, fresh basil, medium rare lamb and a good dollop of Greek yoghurt. *Don't wait . . . get stuck in!*

**Option ② - Serve with Root Veggies** Start preparing at about the 3-hour mark. Chop all the veggies into pieces about the same size so that they will all be ready at the same time. **Use: baby potatoes, beetroot, parsnips, carrots, sprigs of rosemary, olive oil.**

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Blanch the various vegetable types separately in boiling salted water for 10 minutes. Place on a baking tray, add the rosemary and drizzle with olive oil. Slow roast for between 40 minutes and 1 hour, turning occasionally. Once they're cooked, reduce the heat of the oven to its lowest setting to keep them warm.

While the roast is resting make a sauce by pouring all the drippings and scraps of lamb in the baking tray into a pan, mix a teaspoon of cornflour in a cup of milk and add this to the pan. Keep stirring on low heat for between 5 to 10 minutes until the sauce begins to thicken. To serve, place vegetables and slivers of roast lamb on a platter and drizzle the sauce over the meat. **No need to stand on ceremony - help yourself!**

