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Drunken BBQ Lamb Chops

My family never ate lamb when I was growing up, so I didn't try it until I got to culinary school. I quickly fell in love with it—chops, leg of lamb, and, of course, homemade gyros, which I still crave every now and again. Three ingredients in the marinade make this recipe special: the rosemary, hoisin sauce, and brandy. Rosemary is a classic seasoning for lamb, while the hoisin adds depth of flavor, the brandy lends a slight sweetness, and the alcohol accelerates the marinating process.

½ cup Soy Balsamic Sauce (page 38/recipe below)
½ cup brandy
¼ cup hoisin sauce
¼ cup toasted sesame oil
¼ cup loosely packed fresh rosemary leaves, chopped
12 small cloves garlic, minced
16 lamb loin chops, about 1 inch thick

PREP TIME 15 minutes

MARINATE TIME 1 hour

COOK TIME 6 minutes

FEEDS 4 people

Combine the Soy Balsamic Sauce, brandy, hoisin sauce, sesame oil, rosemary, and garlic in a small bowl and mix well. Measure out one-fourth of the marinade and reserve it for basting the meat on the grill.

Place the lamb chops in a large, shallow dish. Spoon the remaining marinade over the chops and turn the chops to coat evenly. Marinate at room temperature for 1 hour.

Heat the grill for direct heat cooking to medium (350°F to 375°F).

Place the chops on the grill over the flames and cook for 3 minutes. Brush or lightly spoon some of the reserved marinade on the chops, turn the chops over, and brush or lightly spoon marinade on the second side. Cook the chops for about 3 minutes longer, until lightly charred on each side.

Transfer the chops to a serving platter and let rest for 4 minutes, then serve.

KUNG FU IT If you can't find lamb, this marinade also works well with the rich flavor of beef, so use it on steaks.

Soy Balsamic Sauce *follows...*



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Soy Balsamic Sauce

This recipe is very dear to my heart, as it was my first attempt to use ingredients that didn't normally go together, but made sense to me. In Asian cooking, vinegar is often used to cut saltiness from soy sauce or other ingredients. For me, balsamic vinegar has the perfect mix of sweetness, acidity, and body to combine with the brown sugar and soy sauce here.

- 1 teaspoon cornstarch, or as needed
- 2 tablespoons water
- ¼ cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup soy sauce

PREP TIME 10 minutes

COOK TIME 10 minutes

MAKES 1 cup

In a small bowl, stir together the cornstarch and water until the cornstarch dissolves and the mixture is the consistency of heavy cream, adding more cornstarch if the mixture is too thin.

Combine the brown sugar, vinegar, and soy sauce in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Stir the cornstarch mixture briefly to recombine, then stir it into the soy-vinegar mixture and simmer over low heat for about 3 minutes, until the sauce thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon.

Remove from the heat, let cool completely, then refrigerate in an airtight container. This sauce will last for months without going bad.



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