

Arni Giouvetsi/Baked Lamb and Orzo

Serves 4

1.5 lbs. top round (or stewing) lamb
olive oil
1 large onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 Tbsp. tomato paste
3/4 cup (about half a can) diced tomatoes
3 cups broth (or water)
8 oz. orzo
plenty of freshly ground pepper and kosher or sea salt
myzithra or good romano for serving

Preheat the oven to 300.

Rub the lamb with olive oil and season very liberally with kosher salt and fresh ground pepper. Remember this is a big hunk of meat, so don't be shy with the seasoning. Sear the lamb in a heavy bottomed skillet/dutch oven/what have you on all sides. Remove from the pan and place in a casserole dish (or set aside until you are ready to put it back in a Dutch oven, if that's what you're using).

Add a little olive oil to the pan and then add the onions. Once the onions are tender, stir in the garlic and tomato paste until the garlic is fragrant and the tomato paste has started to cook off a bit and become incorporated with the onions. Add the diced tomatoes and broth and scrape up any bits at the bottom of the pan. Bring to a boil, season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour the liquid around the lamb in the casserole dish. Cover and bake until the lamb is very tender, about 1.5-2 hours (or more).

Increase the heat in the oven to 350, and stir the orzo into the baking dish. Continue to bake, this time uncovered, until the orzo is cooked and most of the liquid has evaporated, about 20-30 minutes.

Serve pieces of the lamb alongside the orzo and top generously with myzithra or romano cheese.