

Kuzu Tandir (Slow-Roasted Lamb Shoulder)

Turkish · Main Course · Hard · 230 min total · Serves 4

Kuzu tandir is lamb slow-roasted in a clay tandir oven until it falls from the bone, a classic Turkish method. This home version uses a covered Dutch oven at low heat, with the pan juices made into a simple sauce.

Ingredients

- 3 lb bone-in lamb shoulder (fat cap left on)
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp Aleppo pepper (pul biber)
- 1 head garlic (halved crosswise)
- 1 large yellow onion (sliced)
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup water

Method

1. Pat the lamb dry, score the fat cap in a shallow diamond pattern, then rub it all over with the salt, pepper, cumin, paprika and Aleppo pepper. Leave it uncovered in the fridge for at least 1 hour, or overnight, which is hands-off time.
2. Heat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Heat the olive oil in a heavy Dutch oven over medium-high heat, then sear the lamb fat-side down for 5 to 6 minutes until deep golden, and turn to brown the other sides. Move the lamb to a plate.
3. Lower the heat to medium, add the sliced onion, halved garlic, bay leaves and thyme, and cook for 4 to 5 minutes until the onion softens. Pour in the water and scrape up any browned bits.
4. Set the lamb fat-side up on the onions, cover tightly with the lid, and roast for 3 to 3.5 hours at 300°F (150°C). Baste every hour, and roast until a fork slides in easily and the meat reaches about 200°F (93°C) in the thickest part.
5. Move the lamb to a board, tent it loosely with foil, and rest for 15 minutes before pulling it apart.
6. Skim the fat from the pot juices, then simmer the juices for 5 to 10 minutes to reduce slightly. Taste and adjust the salt.
7. Pull the meat into large chunks, discarding the bones and any gristle, then spoon the pan sauce over the top and serve.