

# NUTRITION



## FACT SHEET

### Lamb: The Essence of Nutrient-Rich Flavor

There's nothing better than flavor you can feel good about. Lamb is the perfect combination—deliciously flavorful and nutrient-rich. And there's no mystery to cooking lamb—it couldn't get any easier! Read on!

#### Lamb is Lean

On average, a three-ounce serving of lamb has only 175 calories and meets the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) definition for lean. According to FDA guidelines, lean meat has less than 10 grams of fat, less than 4.5 grams of saturated fat and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 grams or 3.5 ounces.

As the chart below indicates, 3-ounces of lamb can easily fit within the daily fat, saturated fat and cholesterol recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

#### 2005 DIETARY GUIDELINES: HOW LAMB FITS

	Dietary Guidelines for Americans	Average 3-Ounce Cooked Portion of Lamb*
<b>Total Fat</b>	20% to 35% of calories (44 g to 77 g per day for a 2,000 calorie diet)	8 g
<b>Saturated Fat</b>	<10% of calories (20 g or less per day for a 2,000 calorie diet)	3 g
<b>Cholesterol</b>	<300 mg per day	80 mg

\*United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) average of all cuts

#### Lamb is Nutrient-Rich

Because lamb naturally contains many essential nutrients, it's an easy fit for healthy diets. On average, lamb is an excellent source of protein, vitamin B12, niacin, zinc, and selenium, and a good source of iron and riboflavin. All of this within an average of 175 calories per 3-ounce serving makes lamb naturally nutrient-rich.

#### Essential Nutrients in Lamb

**Iron** Iron from animal sources, such as lamb, is more easily absorbed by the body than iron from plant sources. Iron helps red blood cells deliver oxygen to all of the body's tissues, is necessary for immune function, and helps the body synthesize proteins.

**Zinc** Zinc is necessary for wound healing and contributes to growth and development. It is a component of many enzymes and, like iron, is more readily absorbed from animal sources.

**Selenium** Selenium is an antioxidant which works closely with vitamin E and supports immune function.

**Vitamin B12** Found only in foods of animal origin, vitamin B12 plays an essential role in many metabolic reactions. Low levels of vitamin B12 can manifest as anemia, neurological problems and high blood levels of the amino acid homocysteine.

**Niacin** Niacin is a B vitamin necessary for the metabolism of nutrients and the proper function of enzymes.

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**Riboflavin** Riboflavin is a B vitamin involved in energy production and enzyme function.

**Protein** As a major structural component of all human cells, protein is essential for adequate growth, wound healing, immune function and muscle maintenance. It is also essential for the synthesis of enzymes and hormones.

### Cooking Lamb? Easy Does It!

We all know the theory about eating well being good for us, but how do we do it? Turning advice about fat, protein, iron, and zinc into a quick, convenient, healthy meal isn't always easy—but it can be.

There are five major cuts of lamb available in the U.S.: shoulder, rack, shank, loin and leg. Most lamb is sold in supermarkets with fat trimmed to ¼ or ½ inch. You can trim this thin layer of remaining fat from the meat before or after cooking.

Dry heat cooking methods, such as grilling, roasting, or broiling, are suitable for cuts such as chops, roasts, steaks and legs. Moist heat methods, such as braising or stewing, are suitable for cuts such as stew meat and shanks. To ensure lamb remains safe throughout cooking, the USDA recommends cooking lamb patties and ground lamb mixtures, such as meat loaf, to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 °F as measured on a food thermometer. However, whole muscle meats such as roasts, steaks and chops may be cooked to 145 °F (medium rare), 160 °F (medium), or 170 °F (well done).

### Everyday Flavor

Lamb is perfect for convenient, everyday cooking—think beyond “special occasions.” Enjoy the extraordinary flavor of lamb with appetizers, salads, soups and entrees and turn an otherwise ordinary meal into something special.

## CRISP ARUGULA CRUSTED LAMB CHOPS

*Recipe by Laura Pensiero, RD  
Chef and Owner of Gigi Trattoria*

Makes 4 servings

½ cup fresh or dried unseasoned breadcrumbs  
8 fresh arugula leaves  
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese  
2 tablespoons pine nuts or peanuts, optional  
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided  
4 lamb loin chops (about 4 ounces each), trimmed  
1 tablespoon Dijon or grainy mustard  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Place breadcrumbs, arugula, Parmesan, nuts and 1 tablespoon of olive oil into the work bowl of a small food processor. Pulse repeatedly until well mixed and spread mixture onto a plate.

Lightly spread mustard on one side of lamb chops, then press into the bread crumb mixture. Cover and refrigerate.

Preheat cast iron frying pan over medium to medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes. Add cooking oil, season chops with salt and pepper. Place chops, crust side down, in frying pan. Cook until crusted and golden brown, about 2 minutes, then turn over and cook to desired doneness; about 4 minutes for medium-rare. Adjust heat, if necessary, to continue cooking without over browning. Remove from pan and let rest for 3 minutes.

**Nutrition per serving:** 340 calories, 19g total fat (5g saturated fat, 2g polyunsaturated fat, 10g monounsaturated fat), 80mg cholesterol, 330mg sodium, 11g carbohydrate, 29g protein

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