

WATERMELON-GLAZED LAMB CHOPS WITH WATERMELON SOFRITO AND POLENTA

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients	Amounts
<i>Watermelon Molasses</i>	
Seedless watermelon	3 ½ lb.
<i>Watermelon Glaze</i>	
Watermelon Molasses	4 Tbsp.
Dijon mustard	2 Tbsp.
Fresh thyme, finely minced	1 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves, grated on microplane	3 ea.
Lemon juice	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil	1 Tbsp.
<i>Watermelon Sofrito</i>	
Olive oil	½ cup
Shallots, finely minced	1 cup
Poblano peppers, finely minced	1 cup
Fennel seeds, toasted	1 Tbsp.
Spanish paprika	1 Tbsp.
Watermelon flesh, minced	1 lb.
Sherry vinegar	2 tsp.
Sea salt	to taste
<i>Polenta</i>	
Water or stock	5 cups
Coarse cornmeal/polenta	1 cup
Heavy cream	1 cup
Parmesan cheese, finely grated	¼ cup
Butter	2 Tbsp.
Salt	to taste
<i>Lamb Chops</i>	
Lamb chops, 3 - 4 oz. each	12 ea.
Sea salt	to taste
Olive oil	as needed
<i>Garnish</i>	
Fresh herbs (such as parsley, mint)	as needed

Method

1. *For the Watermelon Molasses:* Break down watermelon into chunks.

2. Puree in a food processor and strain through a fine mesh sieve over a receptacle. Press very gently on the solids for maximum extraction.
3. Transfer watermelon juice to a shallow pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Skim the surface and reduce flame to a low simmer.
4. Reduce the molasses by about 2/3, which takes about 4 hours depending on the pot used. Transfer to a smaller pot as this will prevent scorching around the sides. Simmer for about one more hour. The molasses is done when it has a thick syrupy consistency and a dark burgundy color.
5. Transfer to a sterilized mason jar or airtight container. Cool and refrigerate.
6. *For the Watermelon Glaze:* Mix all glaze ingredients together in a small bowl.
7. *For the Watermelon Sofrito:* Add olive oil, shallots and poblano to a sauté pan and sweat over medium-low heat.
8. Add fennel seeds and paprika, and continue to sweat down until mixture starts to stick to the pan.
9. Add minced watermelon and reduce, stirring every couple of minutes until the mixture is thick. Adjust seasoning with sherry vinegar and salt.
10. *For the Polenta:* Bring liquid to a boil and add salt.
11. Gradually whisk in polenta to avoid clumping. Reduce heat to low and stir frequently to avoid scorching, about 30 minutes.
12. Whisk in heavy cream and cheese. Cook for another 10 minutes on low heat.
13. Before serving, stir in butter until evenly incorporated.
14. *For the Lamb Chops:* Preheat a grill or grill pan to high, and preheat an oven to 300°F. If you can close your grill, no need to use the oven.
15. Season each lamb chop liberally with salt and lightly coat with olive oil.
16. Sear lamb chops until a golden-brown crust is formed on all sides. Transfer to a sheet tray with a wire rack.
17. Brush each lamb chop liberally with the watermelon glaze. Transfer to a 300°F oven for 5 minutes or until the internal temperature of lamb reaches 135°F. Alternatively, you can transfer it back to your grill in a region off the direct heat and cover.
18. Serve lamb chops over a bed of about 2 oz. Watermelon Sofrito and about 4 oz. polenta. Garnish with chopped parsley and mint if desired.

Source: Magnus Young, Chef de Cuisine, Clif Family Winery and Bruschetteria Food Truck