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WHAT IS THE NIBL FQAS?

The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FOAS) is owned by the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland on behalf of the beef and sheep meat industry. NIBL FOAS was launched in 1992, almost 30 years ago and is one of the longest running quality assurance schemes in the world. The three key pillars of the scheme are food safety, animal welfare and care for the environment. The scheme was first established to give consumers assurance about the farm end of production of their food, however, has been developed to cover all stages of the beef and lamb supply chain. The farm to fork certification includes farmers, transport, processors and retailers. The scheme shows how supply chain partners work together to promote the credentials of Northern Ireland's world class beef and lamb industry.

Currently there are over 12,000 beef and sheep farmers in Northern Ireland who are voluntary members of the scheme. Members must conform to the robust set of scheme rules and the product standard which is categorised into 8 key elements (Table 1). All members of the scheme are independently inspected every 18 months by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to ensure that all standards are being complied with. Currently LMC employ the Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC)

to operate the certification body for NIBL FQAS. The certification body also carry out unannounced spot checks on up to 10% of approved producers annually. Members who are found to have non conformances must rectify these within the given time frame before they can be certified.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF BUYING A BEEF OR LAMB PRODUCT MARKED WITH THE LOGO?

Consumers who purchase beef or lamb marked with the FQAS logo can be guaranteed that the product has been produced to the highest standards. The robust set of standards that members must follow ensure the product is fully traceable from farm to fork, wholesome. safe and free from unnatural substances. Northern Ireland is fortunate enough to have the perfect climate to produce lush green grass which NIFQA cattle and sheep graze on. Northern Ireland Farm Ouality Assured (NIFOA) beef and lamb is naturally nutritious and is renowned for its succulence and flavour. Consumers who purchase beef or lamb marked with the logo can also be assured that it is produced in harmony with the environment. One of the key pillars of the scheme is care for the environment, Northern Ireland (NI) farms are improving grasslands which helps to sequester carbon from the atmosphere and tackle climate change.



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FOOD FINANCE

WHAT IS FOOD PROVENANCE?

Food provenance refers to the understanding of the processes that food goes through from farm to fork. It means that we know where are food was grown, raised or caught, how it was produced and how it was transported. Food provenance helps consumers make informed decisions when purchasing food. As the global population is predicted to rise to 10 billion by 2050, consumers are more interested in food provenance than ever before. In the United Kingdom we are able to produce a large quantity of food products, some surplus goods are exported and other goods are imported.

In Northern Ireland we have a great climate for growing fruit and vegetables such as apples, potatoes and carrots. We are also surrounded by the ocean which helps us obtain food that is caught, such as mackerel, haddock and mussels. One of the largest sectors in our food industry is food that is reared. Northern Ireland is fortunate to have the perfect climate for producing grass which feeds a lot of our reared animals including beef cattle and sheep out in the fields.

HOW DOES THE NIFQA SCHEME CONTRIBUTE TO FOOD PROVENANCE?

The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme is a quality assurance scheme which independently certifies many stages in the beef and lamb supply chain. The scheme has been promoting high standards across the industry for 25 years. The farm to fork certification includes farmers, transport, processors and retailers. Each of these stages in the supply chain must adhere to a set of high standards that cover animal welfare, health and safety and sustainable practices. The scheme ensures consumers that all aspects of Food Provenance are at the highest standard.

WHY IS FOOD PROVENANCE IMPORTANT?

Food provenance is an important concept for consumers to make informed decisions. Understanding food provenance can help consumers to eat seasonal diets, make food choices informed by food miles and in turn help improve the environmental footprint of our country. Often seasonal produce is grown in optimum conditions and therefore contributes to a better taste and nutritional profile of produce. This helps with the development of taste and contributes to overall health. By understanding the important role quality assurance schemes play in food provenance, an increased standard of animal health and welfare is guaranteed across the supply chain. This provides confidence to consumers that food production chains are going above minimum legislation. Food provenance also contributes to social sustainability, by encouraging consumers to shop locally and support local food industry. It supports food culture and helps to maintain traditional recipes and cooking skills for future generations. Northern Ireland is steeped in food history and culture which is now contributing to broader industries including tourism and economy.



WHAT IS FOOD SAFETY?

Food safety refers to the practices and procedures that are followed in order to keep our food safe and free from contamination. It is not solely up to one person or one group to ensure food is safe for human consumption but in fact a shared responsibility of the whole supply chain. Unsafe food creates health threats to consumers but particularly vulnerable groups such as infants, pregnant women, the elderly and people who have an underlying health condition. Contaminated food can cause the consumer to become severely unwell, with symptoms of abdominal cramps, nausea and fever.

HOW DOES THE NIFQA SCHEME ENSURE FOOD SAFETY THROUGH THE SUPPLY CHAIN?

When consumers see the FQAS logo this is their quarantee that the local beef and lamb they have purchased has been produced safely and to the highest standards. The NIBL FOAS was first developed to give consumers assurance about the farm end of production, however it now extends to cover all stages of the beef and lamb supply chain. The farm to fork certification includes farmers. transport, processors and retailers. The scheme is voluntary to join however all members must comply with the robust set of standards that cover each of these stages. The standards cover food safety, animal welfare and care for the

environment and are continuously evolving to respond to challenges the red meat industry may face. A recent amendment to the scheme is that all members must complete mandatory training from the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) on responsible use of antimicrobials. Misuse of antibiotics in animal husbandry is one of the major causes of antimicrobial resistance which is a growing global health concern. The amendment to the scheme validates that animal health and welfare remains a key pillar of the NIBL FQAS.

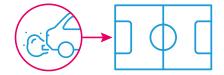
Another key area that the NIBL FQAS covers is traceability, farmers must ensure that birth, death and movement records are recorded on Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) and available to the farm inspector. To ensure that members of the scheme are complying with all standards, independent inspections are completed every 18 months by the Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC) a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). Members with noncompliances may be suspended from the scheme if they are not rectified within the given timeframe. The scheme sees that it is a joint responsibility of all members in the supply chain to work together to produce safe world class beef and lamb.





SUSTAINABILITY REFERS TO THE ABILITY OF SOMETHING TO SUSTAIN ITSELF FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. THERE ARE 3 PILLARS TO SUSTAINABILITY WHICH MUST BE ADDRESSED EQUALLY TO ENSURE SUCCESS. SUSTAINABILITY IS BROKEN DOWN INTO ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC.

In Northern Ireland we are fortunate to have the perfect climate for environmentally sustainable agriculture. Our beef and lamb production systems are less intense than other systems across the world as we can graze animals on grass, which grows in abundance due to our climate. In order to keep our herds within fields, we have a mass of hedgerows. Farmers work to maintain hedgerows and grasslands throughout the year. This could involve improving fertility of land, providing habitats for wildlife and increasing the variety of native plants. Grasslands and hedgerows play an important role in carbon sequestration.



One football pitch sized piece of grassland sequesters the same amount of carbon that a car produces in one year.

All of these roles are in the hands of our farmers, who are constantly working to improve the sustainability of our environment. Animal agriculture and the red meat industry are major employers in Northern Ireland with citizens working across a vast range of roles. The industry is providing economic and social

sustainability for many people in Northern Ireland, and it is important that it continues to evolve through technology and policy for future generations.

The Northern Ireland beef and sheep sector are working in synergy to ensure the sustainability of the industry. Advances in technology are leading the way in measuring and monitoring the inputs and outputs of beef and sheep farming. Some of this technology will be used to help develop a carbon calculation for farms, and potentially throughout the entire supply chain. By understanding the sources of carbon release and the areas we can maximise carbon sequestration we can reach the Net-Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050 legislation set by The Northern Ireland Executive in 2022. The Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance Scheme is built on rigorous standards that address all pillars of sustainability and are continually reviewed in line with requirements and recommendations. The standards adhered to throughout the supply chain are developed with the environment, food safety and traceability in mind. For example, the scheme requires all members to undertake antimicrobial usage training. Anti-microbial resistance is an increasingly serious threat worldwide where disease causing organisms can develop resistance to antimicrobial drugs, for example,



CASE STUDY:

The Northern Ireland beef and lamb supply chain contributes to environmental sustainability in many ways, such as supporting hedgerow management and provision of habitats for native insects and animals. The beef industry contributes almost £1.5 million to the NI economy being the largest contributor to the food and drink sector, positively contributing to economic sustainability. The Northern Ireland food and drink sector provides 113,000 jobs helping maintain communities and encouraging development of internal economy. The output of the supply chain also provides product that can be exported and helps improve economic sustainability. Beef and lamb, the output of the red meat industry is a high biological value protein, a good source of haem iron, Vitamin B12, Zinc and many other nutrients. Access to nutrient rich red meat helps contribute to a healthy balanced diet for society and improves social sustainability.

antibiotics. Over time this can lead to the drugs becoming ineffective in treating infections and diseases. This is just one example of how the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance scheme is helping to ensure a sustainable industry to come.

By looking for the NIFQA logo when you are purchasing beef and lamb, you can be assured you are making a sustainable choice on all three pillars of sustainability. Farmers in Northern Ireland are continually improving their farming practices with the environment in mind. Eco-conscious farming practices will ensure that we will have fertile land and a healthy

environment to produce beef and lamb for years to come. By choosing local produce, we are contributing to the economic sustainability by ensuring the sector can continue to run viably. Fair prices and high standard produce are the reason we produce the highest class beef and lamb in the world. Additionally, it contributes to social sustainability by sustaining the backbone of our society, the agriculture industry. Northern Ireland has been home to many generations of farming families, and continues to grow and provide opportunities for development of careers and livelihoods of our citizens.





PREPARATION: 10 minutes



COOKING: 25 minutes



SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

2 large NIFQA sirloin steaks

250a medium Chinese egg noodles

2 tbsp rapeseed oil

1 large onion

1 large garlic clove

1 tbsp five-spice powder

200g mange-tout

2 large red peppers

120ml hot beef stock

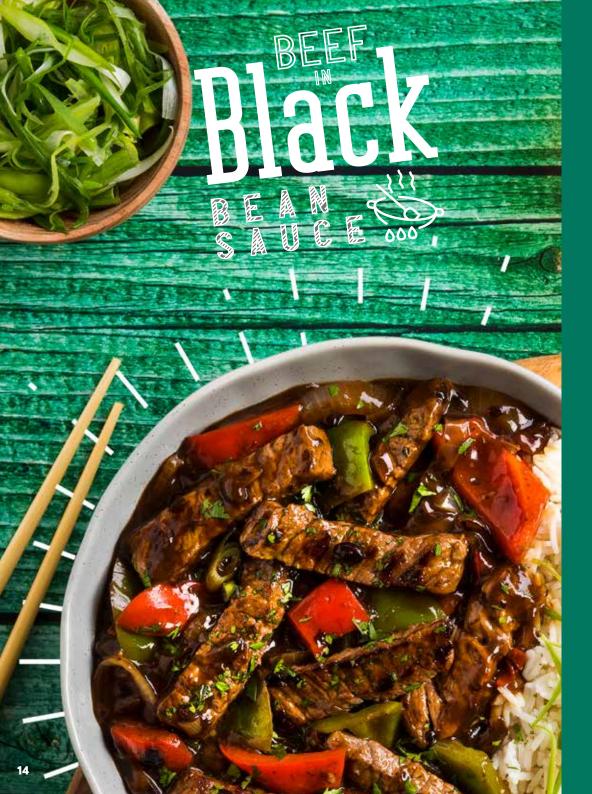
1 tbsp reduced salt soy sauce Freshly ground black pepper

Fresh coriander leaves

CHINESE FIVE SPICE **BEEF WITH NOODLES**

Experience the oriental flavours of this Chinese five spice, made with Northern Irish Farm Quality Assured Steaks, quick to make and extremely tasty!

- 1. Trim the sirloin steaks and cut into thin strips. Cover and set aside.
- 2. Cook the noodles in a saucepan of boiling water for 4 minutes, or according to the packet instructions. Drain the noodles well and set aside.
- 3. While the noodles are cooking, heat a wok or a large heavy-based frying pan until hot. Peel and finely slice the onion and garlic clove and chop the peppers. Add half the oil and swirl to coat the wok, then add the onion and peppers and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Add the five-spice powder and garlic and stir-fru for another minute. Remove and set aside.
- 4. Add the remaining oil to the wok, turn up the heat and add the steak strips. Stir-fry for 3 minutes. Return the peppers and onions, then add the mange-tout and stir-fry for a further 2 minutes. Pour in the stock, stir well and bring to the boil.
- 5. Add the noodles to the wok, and toss everything together. Heat and stir for 2–3 minutes until all the ingredients are well combined. To finish add the soy sauce, black pepper and coriander leaves. Serve immediately!





INGREDIENTS

2 NIFQA rump steaks

3 tbsp cornflour

Pinch black pepper

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

1 onion

2 cloves garlic

1 green pepper

1 red pepper

2 packets black bean sauce

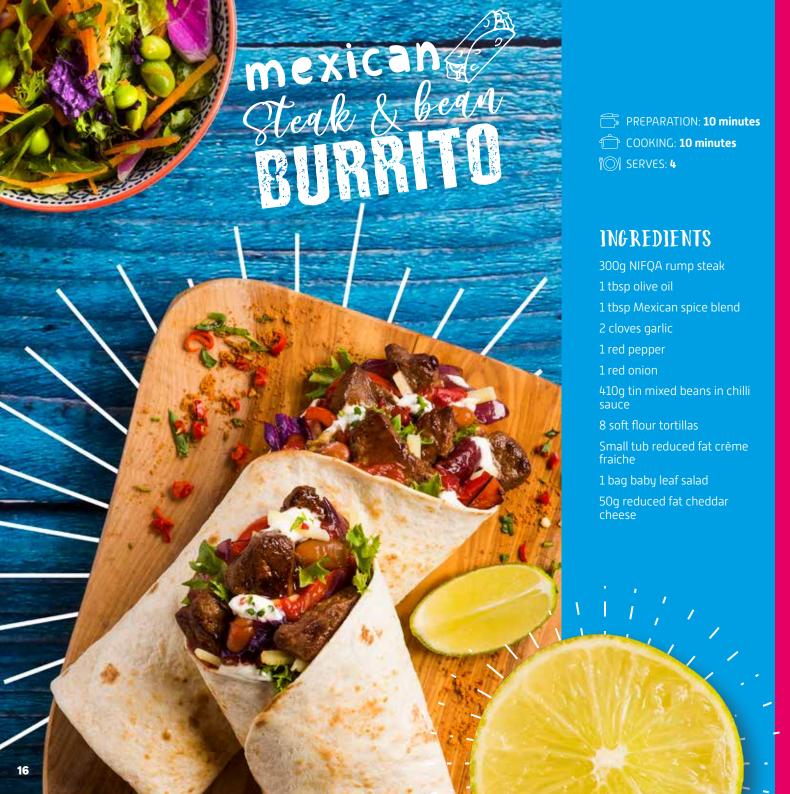
350g long grain rice

2 scallions (optional)

BEEF IN BLACK BEAN SAUGE

Tender slices of NIFQA beef in a rich black bean sauce, makes the perfect take-away alternative!

- 1. On green chopping board peel and finely slice onion. Peel and crush garlic.
- 2. Wash, deseed and finely slice peppers.
- 3. Wash and finely slice scallions.
- 4. On red chopping board remove visible fat from rump steak and slice thinly. Wash hands after handling raw meat.
- 5. Cook rice as per instructions on packet.
- 6. Place cornflour in a mixing bowl, add black pepper and rump steak. Toss well.
- 7. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a wok or pan until hot, add beef and cook until brown.
- 8. Remove beef to plate.
- 9. Reserve meat juices from the wok/pan.
- 10. Heat remaining 1 tbsp oil in wok/pan add vegetables and stir fry for 3 minutes to soften slightly.
- 11. Add black bean sauce, beef and reserved meat juices back to the wok/pan.
- 12. Toss all together well to combine and cook for 2 minutes.
- 13. Serve with cooked rice.
- 14. Garnish with scallions.





- 1. On the red board, trim any visible fat from the steak and slice thinly. Remember to wash hands thoroughly after handling raw meat.
- 2. Peel and chop the red onion. Peel and crush the garlic. Remove the stem and seeds from the pepper and cut into dice.
- Grate the cheese and put into a bowl. Use a separate bowl for the crème fraiche and another for the salad.
- Heat the pan until very hot. Add half of the oil and fry the steak slices with the Mexican spice. Cook until brown then remove to a plate, cover with foil and leave to rest.
- Reduce the heat under the pan to medium.
 Add the remaining oil to the pan with the onion and fry for a minute. Add the garlic and pepper and continue to cook for a further minute.
- 6. Add the beans with sauce, heat through, then add the steak.
- 7. Meanwhile heat the tortillas according to the pack instructions.
- 8. Divide the steak mixture between 4 serving bowls. Serve the tortillas on a plate alongside the grated cheese, the crème fraiche and the salad. Bring everything to the table to allow everyone to make up their own burritos. (To eat, fold up the base first, then the sides).
- 9. Optional extras: guacamole, salsa, pickled red onion.



SPICY JERK BURGERS WITH PINEAPPLE SALSA

Enjoy this luxurious burger made with NIFQA beef, the sweetness of the pineapple contrasting perfectly with the spice of the burger.

- Wash, trim and finely chop the spring onions and the coriander, ensuring to chop the coriander leaves and stalks separately.
- In a large bowl, mix together the mince, spicy jerk paste, half the spring onions, the finely chopped coriander stalks, the egg and crushed cream crackers.
- 3. Season the mince mixture well and shape into 6 firm patties. (Remember to wash your hands thoroughly after handling raw meat.) Transfer to a plate, cover and chill for 10 minutes to firm up.
- 4. Peel, core and dice the fresh pineapple and place the pieces into a bowl. Deseed and finely chop the red chillies, add these to the bowl as well as adding the remaining spring onions and coriander leaves, season and mix well.
- 5. Heat a griddle pan until hot. Lightly oil the burgers and cook for 5 minutes on each side until cooked through. Heat a clean griddle pan, cut the burger buns in half and place the bun halves cut side down, and toast briefly. Serve the burgers in the buns topped with the salsa and rocket leaves.





PREPARATION: 15 minutes



COOKING: 25 minutes



SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

500g NIFQA mince steak

2 tbsp oil

250ml beef stock

1 carrot

1 onion

1 yellow & 1 red pepper

1 clove garlic

1 rounded tsp ginger paste

2 rounded tbsp tomato ketchup

2 tbsp soy sauce

1/2 lemon

1 tbsp cornflour, mixed with 2 tbsp Water

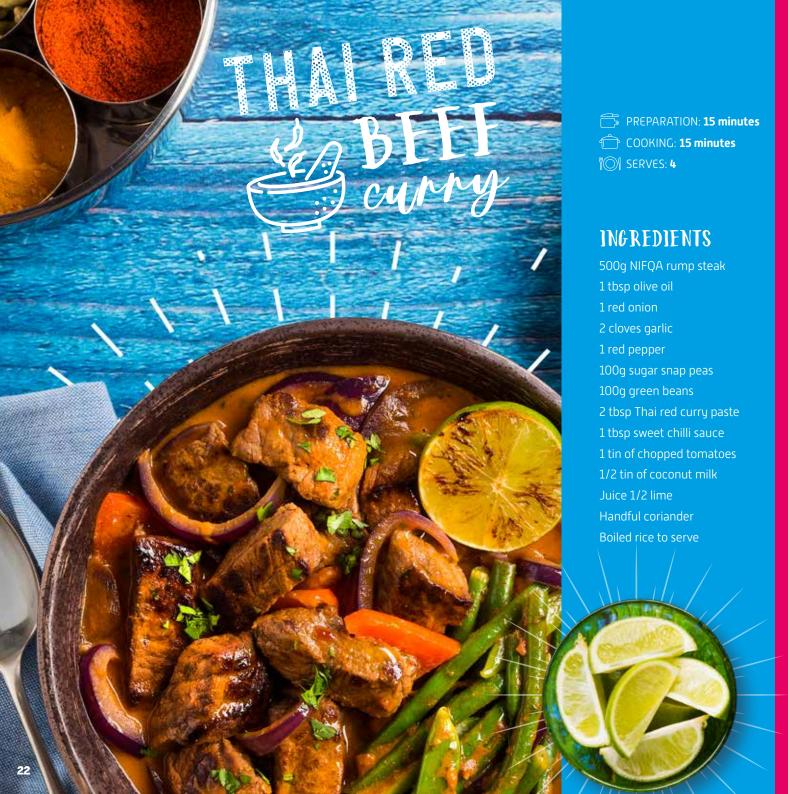
220g pineapple chunks in juice

Rice to serve

SWEET AND SOUR MEATBALLS

NIFQA meatballs cooked in a delicious sweet and sour sauce, a meal the whole family will love!

- 1. Place the mince into a medium bowl, roll into 16 even sized meatballs.
- 2. Heat oil in a large frying pan, add the meatballs and fry for 5 minutes, turning occasionally.
- 3. Finely dice the onion and crush the garlic clove, add these and cook for a further 2 minutes.
- 4. Make the beef stock.
- 5. Peel and slice the carrot and add it, then cook for a further 3-4 minutes until tender.
- 6. Pour over the stock, bring to the boil then reduce heat and simmer for 5-6 minutes.
- 7. Cut the peppers into chunks and drain the pineapple chunks and add these.
- 8. In a separate bowl, mix the ginger, ketchup, soy, lemon juice, pineapple juice and cornflour/ water paste.
- 9. Pour sauce over the meatballs, simmer for 3-4 minutes, serve with rice.



THAI RED BEEF CURRY

This Thai red coconut-based curry using NIFQA Beef has the perfect combination of flavours, made from sweet chilli sauce, chopped tomatoes and served on a bed of boiled rice.

- On a red board trim any fat from the steak. Cut the steak into thin slices. Remember to wash hands thoroughly after handling raw meat.
- 2. Peel and thinly slice the onion. Peel and crush the garlic. Remove the stem and seeds from the pepper and cut it into strips. Cut the sugar snap peas in half diagonally. Trim the beans and cut into bite sized pieces. Wash and chop the coriander.
- Heat the pan until very hot. Add half of the oil then the steak. Fry until brown then remove to a plate. Cover with foil.
- 4. Reduce the heat under the pan and add the remaining oil. Fry the onion until beginning to soften, add the garlic, Thai red curry paste, the sweet chilli sauce, the tinned tomatoes and the coconut milk. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes.
- Add the pepper, peas and beans and continue to simmer for a further 5 minutes. Add the steak for a final minute to reheat
- 6. Turn off the heat and add the lime juice and coriander.
- 7. Serve on a bed of rice sprinkled with the remaining coriander.



MINI LAMB MEATBALLS WITH PENNE

A delicious twist on a classic meal, lamb meatballs made with Northern Irish Farm Quality Assured lamb with the addition of peas, feta cheese and mint.

- 1. Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease a non-stick baking tray.
- Finely chop the spring onions and crush the garlic, mix these with the minced Lamb, rosemary, egg and breadcrumbs.
- 3. Mix together all the ingredients for the meatballs and season well with salt and pepper.
- 4. Pinch off small cherry-sized pieces of the mince mixture, roll into balls and arrange on the baking tray with space between each one. Drizzle with a little olive oil, then cook in the hot oven for about 20 minutes. Shake the tray half way through to help the meat balls brown.
- 5. Put a large pan of lightly salted water on to boil, while you chop up the tomatoes. Cook the pasta according to the timing given on the pack, drain then mix with the tomatoes and peas, roughly crumble the feta and tear the mint leaves and add these to the pasta and a little extra olive oil if you wish.
- 6. Check the meatballs are cooked through then toss them and any pan juices in with the pasta mixture and serve straight away.







COOKING: 15-20 minutes



INGREDIENTS

4 NIFQA lamb leg steaks

1 small onion

300ml ginger ale

2 tbsp light soy sauce

2 garlic cloves

2 tbsp runny honey Freshly milled black pepper

For Asian Slaw:

1/4 white cabbage

1/4 red cabbage

2 carrots

2cm / 3/4in piece fresh ginger

1 red chilli

2 limes zest and juice

1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds (optional)



NIFQA lamb steaks coated in a delicious marinade made with soy sauce, ginger ale and honey, complimented by the bold flavours of the Asian slaw.

- 1. To begin, prepare the slaw. Finely shred the white and red cabbage, grate the carrots, peel and grate the ginger and chop the chilli. Mix these with the lime zest and juice along with the sesame seeds.
- 2. Set aside.
- 3. To prepare the sticky marinade; peel and chop the onion and finely chop the garlic cloves. In a large non-metallic dish mix all the ingredients together. Add the lamb and marinate for a minimum of 2 hours, or overnight if time allows.
- 4. Heat a non stick frying pan to a high heat.
- 5. Remove the steaks from the marinade and cook on high heat to raw, medium or well-done preference.
- 6. Serve with Asian slaw.





PREPARATION: 40 minutes



COOKING: 10 minutes



SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

Spiced lamb

4 NIFQA lamb leg steaks

2 tsp paprika

1 tsp ground cumin

1 clove garlic

2 tbsp olive oil

1 lime

Tzatziki

1/2 cucumber

250g Greek style yogurt

1 garlic clove

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve

1 tbsp dill or use mint plus extra to serve

Salt and black pepper

SPICED LAMB WITH TZATZIKI

Spiced NIFQA lamb kebabs seasoned with paprika, cumin and garlic served on a slice of pitta with a side of refreshing tzatziki, creating the perfect summer meal!

METHOD

- 1. To make the tzatziki: Peel, deseed and grate the cucumber, use a clean muslin or tea towel and squeeze any liquid out of the cucumber and discard, then put the pulp into a bowl.
- 2. Crush the garlic clove and stir in the yogurt, olive oil, and freshly chopped dill and salt. Chill for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavours to come together.
- 3. Taste and check the seasoning before serving with a swirl of olive oil and a little extra chopped dill. Allow to chill.
- 4. Meanwhile make the spiced lamb by peeling and finely chopping the garlic clove and mixing it with the paprika, cumin, olive oil and juice of 1/2 lime and season well. Cut the lamb into cubes and add it to ensure it's coated and allow to marinate for 1 hour or overnight.
- 5. Thread the lamb pieces onto a soaked wooden skewer and heat a griddle pan until really hot before adding the lamb. Cook until golden and slightly charred. Add the remaining lime juice to the pan and allow to sizzle.
- 6. Serve with the chilled tzatziki and a Greek salad for a delicious supper.

Greek salad: Simply combine 4 vine tomatoes. quartered, with 1/2 cucumber, cut into chunks, 1/2 red onion thinly sliced, 12 kalamata olives, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, 85g feta cheese, cubed and 2 tablespoons extra virgin Greek olive oil. Season well!

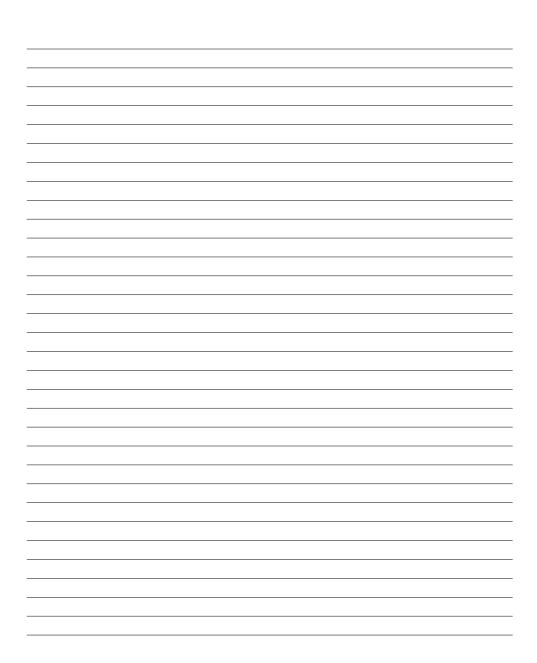


LAMB GURRY

The combination of sweet and savoury spices makes a delicious curry using lean NIFQA lamb, with the colours of the vegetables tossed throughout, it creates a meal which is hard to resist.

- 1. Peel and chop the onion. Peel and crush the garlic.
- 2. Chop the coriander and mint.
- 3. Remove the root and skin from the spring onions and chop.
- 4. Using a separate chopping board, thinly slice the lamb. Remember to thoroughly wash your hands after handling raw meat.
- 5. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the onion until soft.
- 6. Add the garlic, curry powder, coconut milk, stock cube, tomato puree and mango chutney and stir.
- 7. Bring the sauce to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring continuously.
- 8. Add the spring onions and chopped herbs.
- 9. Add the lamb, stir and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Check that the lamb is thoroughly cooked and there are no pink juices.
- 10. Add chopped vegetables and stir through the lamb curry. Bring back to the boil and turn off heat.
- 11. Serve with whole grain rice, Greek yogurt, mango chutney and fresh herbs.









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Find easy and tasty recipes at: food4life.org.uk

For more information visit: beefandlambni.com & Imcni.com





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