

GLAZED HAM HOCK & ROAST CROWN OF LAMB

Meat always takes centre stage at the Huber family's annual family Christmas Eve dinner.

There is either roast beef or roast pork, or a roast goose, duck or turkey. There can be ham, lamb or roast quail too.

The family changes the offerings each year for variety.

Mr Ernst Huber (centre, with Ryan and Andre, in blue shirt), 67, is originally from Switzerland, just outside the city of Zurich. He runs Huber's Butchery, a meat supplier with a retail butchery and grocery shop in Dempsey Hill, with his two sons Ryan, 36, and Andre, 34. Ernst is married to housewife Dorothy, also 67, who is Singaporean Chinese.

In the past, he used to do the roasting and cooking, but these days, Ryan, who learnt to roast meats when he was a teenager, has taken over.

The family's Christmas dinner now includes Ryan and Andre's spouses, and their growing families.

Ryan and his wife Joann, 34, a housewife, have a son who is almost two, and another son on the way. Andre and his wife Belinda, 32, who co-owns an online baby clothing shop, have two daughters aged 20 months and three months.



GLAZED HAM HOCK

INGREDIENTS

2 hind pork knuckles, skin on (1.2 to 1.5kg each)

For brining solution:

About 2 litres of water
100g curing salt (available at Huber's Butchery)
10 cloves of garlic, peeled
10 juniper berries
20g black peppercorns
50g honey

For cooking and glazing:

Water (for boiling the pork knuckles)
Juice, such as apple juice (optional)
200g honey
80 to 100 cloves

METHOD

Brining:

1. Bring the water to the boil in a large pot. Remove from heat and add the salt, garlic, juniper berries, black peppercorns and hon-



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ey. Stir until the honey and salt dissolve. Leave to cool and refrigerate overnight.

2. The next day, put the pork knuckles into an air-tight container. If you do not have one large enough, use two separate ones. Pour the brining solution over the knuckles. Make sure that they are fully submerged. Seal the container and refrigerate for seven days.

Cooking and glazing:

1. After seven days, remove the pork knuckles from the brine.
2. Submerge them fully in a pot of water and simmer for six to eight hours at about 90 deg C. You can also add juice to the simmering solution to give more flavour to the pork knuckles.
3. When they are cooked and have softened, remove from heat. Leave to cool for 10 minutes.
4. Using a sharp knife, remove the skin, keeping as much of the fat on the meat as possible.
5. Score the fat in a diamond pattern. Cuts should be about 5mm deep.
6. Preheat oven to 220 deg C for 15 minutes.
7. While the oven is heating up, brush honey all over the pork knuckles. Set remaining honey aside. Insert cloves into the corners of the diamond-scored fat.
8. Turn down the temperature of the oven to 200 deg C. Place pork knuckles in the oven for 10 minutes.
9. Remove from oven, glaze with more honey, then return to oven for another 10 minutes. Repeat until the fat begins to melt, some edges begin to char, and a shiny, deep orange colour is achieved.
10. Cool for 10 minutes before carving.

Serves eight, with other dishes. Recipe can be halved.

ROAST LAMB CROWN

INGREDIENTS

2 racks of lamb, about 700g each
10g fresh rosemary
10g fresh thyme
5 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced



2 Tbs olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Other items:

Butcher's twine
Butcher's needle
Aluminium foil

METHOD

1. Place the lamb rack on a cutting board and make slits on the underside of the rack, between each of the rib bones. This is to help the rack bend into crown later on.
2. In a hot pan, heat olive oil, rosemary, thyme and sliced garlic for about three minutes. Sear the lamb racks on all sides. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper. Set aside garlic and herbs from pan for garnishing.
3. To tie the rack into a crown, place them on an oven tray with the bones pointing to the ceiling and the slits facing outwards. Tie the racks together with twine, using a needle if necessary. Secure with additional twine if necessary. Place a ball of aluminium foil in the centre of the crown to keep the round shape intact. To keep the tips of the bones from burning, wrap each one with aluminium foil.
4. To roast, preheat oven to 200 deg C for 15 minutes.
5. Turn down the temperature to 170 deg C, then roast the lamb crown for 25 minutes. Let it rest for 10 minutes before carving. To serve, drizzle with the herbs and garlic which had been set aside earlier.

Serves eight with other dishes

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