

Baked Lamb with Cheese, Eggs and Peas (Agnello Cacio Uova e Piselli)

By Emiko

This is a rich and hearty dish that's particularly loved around Easter time, but a dish so good you'll want to eat it all spring long. A well known recipe in Abruzzo and it's smaller neighbour, Molise, Agnello Cacio e Uova is a simple stew of diced lamb cooked until tender in white wine, which is then topped with a mixture of beaten eggs and Pecorino cheese. The lamb stew is done in so many ways, varying from town to town across the region and even more so when you pass from Molise to Abruzzo. In Abruzzo and Lazio it's also known as brodettato, where the eggs, mixed with some lemon juice and plenty of cheese, make a thick, creamy sauce once poured over the slow-cooked stew. Meanwhile, in Molise, the stew is transferred to the oven to bake, where the eggs set, forming an omelette-y golden crust over the top rather than a sauce. This seasonal version includes fresh peas for a comforting one-pot meal. A touch of freshly grated nutmeg goes well and often some chopped prosciutto is added to the onion too. The lamb can be cooked with stock as well as (or in place of) the wine. For the lamb, shoulder is best, as it melts down into the most tender pieces of meat with long cooking. Pecorino is always more traditional in recipes from these regions than Parmesan but if you can't get it, Parmesan or Grana will do.

Serves 4

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 onion, sliced thinly
 - 2 pounds (1 kilogram) lamb shoulder, diced
 - 1 cup (250 milliliters) dry white wine
 - 1 pound (450 grams) fresh peas in their shells (about 1 cup or 200 grams of frozen or fresh, podded peas)
 - Salt and pepper
 - 4 eggs
 - Juice of 1/2 lemon
 - 2/3 cups grated Pecorino cheese
 - Handful of fresh parsley, chopped
1. Heat olive oil in an oven-proof pot and gently saute the onion until soft and translucent. Add the lamb and let it brown evenly. Pour in the wine, turn heat down to a simmer and cook until lamb is tender and the liquid has reduced.
 2. Meanwhile shell the peas and a few minutes before lamb is ready, add to the pot. Season with salt and pepper.
 3. Beat the eggs together with the lemon juice, cheese and parsley. Pour the egg mixture over the top of the lamb stew and bake at 350°F until golden brown on top, about 15-20 minutes.