



## lamb chops with mint pesto

inspired by Giada De Laurentiis

prep time: 30 min  
cook time: 40 min  
ready in: 1 hr 30 min

servings: 2

### ingredients:

- 3/4 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
- 1/4 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup walnuts (preferably roasted and unsalted)
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt, plus more for seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, plus more for seasoning
- 1/4 cup quality extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 teaspoons (about 2/3 ounce) Chevre cheese
- 8 quail eggs
- 1 (about 1 1/2-pound) rack of lamb, trimmed and Frenched

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### directions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Blend the mint, basil, walnuts, cheese, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper in a blender or food processor until the herbs are finely chopped. With the machine running, gradually add 2 tablespoons of oil until the mixture is smooth and creamy. If necessary, add more oil, salt, and pepper to taste.

Trim off any excess fat on the rack of lamb and pat dry with a paper towel. Generously sprinkle both sides with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a cast-iron skillet over high heat. Place the rack of lamb meat-side down in the skillet and cook just until brown, about 2-3 minutes. Turn the rack of lamb meat-side up using a pair of tongs and brown for another 2-3 minutes.

Transfer the cast-iron skillet into the oven and roast to desired doneness, about 18 minutes for medium-rare. Remove from the oven and set aside to rest for 10 minutes.

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Meanwhile, fry the quail eggs in a non-stick pan, sunny-side up. Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in a non-stick pan over medium-high heat. Since the quail eggs are so tiny, it's best to first crack each egg into a small bowl or measuring cup and then gently pour the egg into the hot pan and fry for 2 minutes. If you are using a small omelet pan, only fry two eggs at most at a time to avoid scrambling the eggs.

Transfer the eggs to a lined baking sheet.

After the lamb has rested, cut the lamb between the bones into single chops. Spread 1 teaspoon of the pesto over each chop and top with 1/2 teaspoon dab of chevre cheese.

Melt the cheese using a blow torch or under the broiler until just bubbling. Top each lamb chop with a fried quail egg and serve with extra pesto on the side.

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### notes:

To enhance the flavor of the meat, I dry-aged the rack of lamb overnight in the fridge. This action is purely optional, but I decided to try it after watching Alton Brown's episode on how to dry-age your own steaks at home. I'm not positive I could taste a difference, but the lamb chops were delicious so it definitely wasn't a bad idea!

If you're feeling timid about eating eggs over-easy, after transferring the fried eggs to a lined baking sheet, simply pop it in the oven for a couple minutes while you're dressing up the lamb chops. The oven will still be warm enough to cook the quail egg yolks to your desired doneness.

Don't let leftover pesto go to waste! Toss with plain pasta for a quick, delicious lunch or dinner the next day!