

Lamb Chops with Pomegranate Pistachio Couscous

*** Lamb chops can be barbequed if desired with sauce added later

1 c cilantro leaves (nb double recipe)

2 garlic cloves

1 tbsp ground cumin

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

¼ c fresh lemon juice

1 tsp finely grated lemon zest

2 tbsp & 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil

salt & pepper

4 7 ounce lamb loin chops trimmed

(or 8 smaller ones)

1 1/2c water

¼ tsp cinnamon

1 c couscous

2 tbsp chopped mint

2 tbsp chopped pistachios (unsalted)

¼ c pomegranate seeds

¼ c & 2 tbsp pomegranate juice

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a blender or food processor combine cilantro, garlic, cumin, cayenne & lemon juice with ½ tsp of the lemon zest and 1 tbsp of the olive oil. Season with salt & pepper & process to a paste. Spread all but 1 tbsp of the season paste over the lamb chops and let stand 10 minutes.

Meanwhile in a small saucepan bring water to a boil. Add cinnamon, 1 tbsp of olive oil and ½ tsp of salt. Stir in the couscous, cover and remove from heat; let stand until all the water has been absorbed, about 10 minutes. Transfer the couscous to a large bowl

and fluff with a fork. Stir in the mint, pistachios, half of the pomegranate seeds and the remaining ½ tsp of lemon zest. Cover & keep warm.

Heat the remaining 1 tsp of olive oil in a medium ovenproof skillet. Scrape off the seasoning paste on the hops. Add the chops to the pan and cook over moderate heat, turning once, until browned about 5 minutes. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast for 6 minutes for medium rare meat. Transfer the lamb to a plate and pour off the fat in the skillet.

Set the skillet over moderate heat & add the pomegranate juice & the reserved 1 tbsp of the seasoning paste. Cook, scraping up any bits stuck to the pan. Simmer over moderate heat until reduced to ¼ c, about 2 minutes.

Mound the couscous on plates and top with the chops. Spoon the sauce on the meat, sprinkle the remaining pomegranate seeds and serve right away.

Recommended wine: juicy, spicy Grenache