



*Countryfile* and *Escape To The Country* presenter Jules Hudson is an avowed foodie, as his columns in *Welsh Border Life* often reveal. And having been invited round for tea and cake in the fabulous kitchen of his Herefordshire home, we can see why!

## LAMB ROAST

**Serves** 4

**Cooking time:** 90 mins

### Ingredients

- 1 leg of Welsh Lamb
- 15 garlic cloves
- 15 small sprigs of rosemary
- Sea salt
- Cracked black pepper, smoked
- Olive oil

## JULES HUDSON LAMB ROAST

A Sunday classic, truly relished

**“As a child, I developed a passion for mint sauce** such that these days I insist on having it on the table whatever flavour our roast is. All those conventions that say otherwise have long since been filed in the bin marked madness. My parents used to take me to a restaurant close to where I grew up in Dedham, a village made famous by landscape painter John Constable. Lamb was my favourite thing on the menu, but as much for the fresh sauce they made as the lamb itself. One day I asked if I could help make the sauce, so the chef came out with a pair of scissors and we went out to the garden. I was captivated by the idea that my favourite sauce came from a simple bush. They taught me how to make it and, often after, I’d collect the leaves and hand them to a waiter, sure in the knowledge they’d flavour my lamb that afternoon. These days, if lamb is in the oven and we haven’t any mint source, the ravens might as well have left the Tower of London.

Nearly 30 years ago, an old farmer friend of mine on Anglesey, Will Davies, asked me to stay for supper, for what he promised was the finest lamb on the island. The farm was old school, not exactly the tidiest, and Will’s family had farmed it for generations. The farmhouse itself was a shambles ever since his wife had moved out. Very little was left – with one notable exception. In the kitchen stood a huge refectory table that had survived only because it had been built in situ a century before and couldn’t be carried out. Upon this work of art I waited for Will to put the finishing touches to his leg of home-grown lamb. In the filthiest of roasting dishes the gravy was made and finally the whole lot served up in front of an ancient cast-iron range fuelled with coal and red diesel. And he was right. The lamb was as legendary as the man who’d cooked it, and for years after we enjoyed it whenever I saw him.

At home I cook it slowly and infuse it with garlic and rosemary. We also like to take a lot of time over the gravy, and in this respect I separate the fat from the juices prior to making it. The vegetables we roast in goose fat having cut them sparingly into fairly large long spears of carrots and parsnips. Big Yorkshires, with lashings of peas and purple sprouted broccoli finish it all off.

I think old Will would be proud of my efforts all these years later, but as good as mine is, I’ve yet to compete with his gravy. Maybe he had a secret ingredient, or a secret step in the process. Or maybe he just didn’t wash the tin. Either way, it’s a secret he’s taken with him. God bless you old friend.

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160C / gas mark 3.
2. Using a sharp knife, make 30 incisions in the meaty end of the leg, then fill the holes with the garlic cloves and rosemary sprigs equally.
3. Place the meat on a roasting tray, season with sea salt and pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Lightly rub the seasoning into the flesh to coat the leg.
4. Roast the leg in the oven for an hour, or until the core temperature reaches 58C. Put the lamb to one side to rest in a warm place for about 20 minutes. Carve and serve.