

Decadent Lamb and Orzo Stew

500 g stewing lamb cubes
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 leek, finely sliced (alternatively you could use an onion, I just prefer the sweetness of a leek)
1 large red pepper, diced
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 cinnamon stick
125 ml of good quality red wine (if you wouldn't drink it, don't put it in your food)
125 ml tomato passata (or tinned, chopped tomatoes)
500 ml beef stock
250 ml orzo (I added 125 ml at first, but it was not enough!)
Salt and pepper
Parmesan and fresh basil to serve

As with 90% of stew recipes, this one starts with browning the meat. My lamb was very lean so I browned it in one tablespoon of olive oil. Remember to salt the meat heavily on both sides!

Once the meat is nice and caramelized, remove it from the pot and start sautéing your leeks and red pepper on a low heat. I added the other tablespoon of olive oil here.

When the peppers are soft, add the garlic, tomato paste and oregano and sauté for a few seconds.

De-glaze the pan with the wine and then add the passata, stock, cinnamon stick and the browned meat. Simmer on a low heat for one and a half hours, or until your lamb is tender.

Add the orzo and reduce the heat even more. The orzo needs about 15 minutes to become *al dente*. Stir the stew every few minutes; orzo tends to stick to the bottom of the pot easily! Taste and adjust your seasonings.

Serve piping hot with some grated Parmesan, fresh basil and heaps of black pepper.

Orzo is an Italian/ Greek commodity made with a mixture of semolina and white flour.

