

Butchering a lamb or sheep

Contributed by Justme

Justme shows you how to do it.

First catch your lamb. This guide is just one way of cutting up a lamb to end up with the traditional cuts of:-

2 x legs 2 x shoulders 2 x neck fillets ? x loin chops ? x saddle chops

I will also cover how to tie a butcher's slip knot

Necessary items

A lamb or sheep, cutting surface (butchers block, table, work surface, door etc etc)

1 x good sharp kitchen knife Hot soapy water & cloths

Desirable items

Meat saw Heavy chopper Boning knife

Hygiene is paramount. Ensure that the area you are working in is clean and free from clutter. All of your equipment should be clean and sharp. Keep meat chilled until you need to work on it. Return meat to the fridge as soon as possible. Try to work in a cool environment out of direct sunlight. Care at this stage will improve the taste and quality of your lamb.

Take a deep breath. The first cut is to remove both the back legs in one piece.

The exact position of this cut is not critical as you might require a long leg (or wish to cut the leg in to two as a later picture shows) or you may wish to have a short leg and more chops / loin. Make the cut all the way round the carcass. If you have a meat saw or cleaver cut through the bone with that. If you do not use a heavy kitchen knife and a wooden rolling pin.

Once you have this joint cut of you can cut them a part by following the natural join between them.

If you have a short leg you can do this with just the knife, on a long leg you will need the chopper / saw. Put the two legs to one side (in the fridge if you can).

Now separate the two halves of the rib cage

At this point you can proceed to remove the shoulders. With the carcass on its back you can pull apart the front legs and insert a knife into the natural seam between it and the rib cage. Follow this all the way to the back bone. The front legs will come off surprisingly easily. Place with the back legs.

You can now trim the belly flaps following the line of the ribcage. As you get close to the saddle (loin with no ribs) curve the cut to become parallel with the backbone.

Put to one side with any other trim for mincing later. Now look at the ribs and decided how long you want them to be on your chops. Mark each end with your knife and join the marks up. Then cut with saw of chopper cut ribs into BBQ sized bits.

You can then cut of the neck off at about the third rib. You then fillet the neck following the bones with your knife.

Put fillets with all the other bits.

You should now only have the long loin in front of you.

I prefer to now cut the saddle from the chops just after the last rib.

I then cut the saddle in to approx 1" thick Barnsley chops.

Then take the loin and cut it lengthways into two loins.

This can then be cut into your chops by following the ribs

(on large lambs each rib on small lambs every other one).

You should now have something like this.

Or on a bigger lamb, this

Butcher's knots

First catch your string;

Ensure you are using proper butcher's string.
Tie a simple knot in the end. Then loop it under the joint. Take

the end with the knot in and pass it round the other end the cross over and round the back of its self.

Then down through the loop, you can now pull the long end tight around the joint. Take the long end and make a loop round your finger, drop this loop over the short end with the knot in it. Pull tight and cut long end off.

Repeat as needed to firm up the joint. Thankyou to overthegate, where this article first appeared. If you have any questions or suggestions about this article, please visit our forums.