

I love lamb chops – especially grilled ones! When cooked to a perfect medium-rare, their flavor is just irresistible, slightly earthy and subtly rich. So I don't like to mask that marvelous taste with heavy sauces. I created this pesto to pair with the grilled chops. It's the perfect complement to their flavor, adding a bit of zest without overwhelming the flavor of the lamb.

### **Grilled Double Lamb Chops with Garlic and Cilantro Pesto with Jalapeño**

To Serve 4.

2 8-bone French-boned lamb rib racks  
Texas extra-virgin olive oil  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

#### **Garlic and Cilantro Pesto with Jalapeño**

Makes about 3 cups.

4 bunches fresh cilantro, washed and dried well  
2 bunches of fresh mint  
1/3 cup minced raw garlic  
1/4 cup skin-on sliced almonds, toasted  
1/2 cup minced jalapeno  
1 cup red wine vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon sea salt, or to taste  
1 teaspoon red (cayenne) pepper  
1/3 cup Texas extra-virgin olive oil, or more depending on consistency desired

Make the pesto first. Combine all ingredients in work bowl of food processor fitted with steel blade. Process until smooth. The mixture should be fairly stiff and spreadable. If you prefer a looser consistency, add additional olive oil. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serve at room temperature.

Build a hardwood charcoal fire and allow the fire to burn down to the point where the coals are glowing red, covered by a layer of white ash. Or heat a gas char grill to medium-high heat. Cut the lamb racks into two-bone portions. You should have a total of eight double chops.

Glaze both sides of each chop with some of the olive oil. Season each side with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Grill the chops on the first side for about 4 minutes. Turn the chops and grill for 4 to 5 minutes longer for medium-rare chops. Internal temperature should be 130 degrees. Grill 6 minutes after turning

for medium, or to the desired degree of doneness. Serve two double chops per person, with Garlic and Cilantro Pesto with Jalapeño.

Note: "French-boned" chops have all of the meat removed from the slender top portion of the bone, leaving the bone bare.

Recipe Courtesy of Terry Thompson-Anderson, CCP  
Les Dame d 'Escoffier