

Lamb: The “Multivitamin” Meat

Like other meats, lamb is an excellent source of nutritionally complete protein, providing all eight essential amino acids in the right ratios. But protein is not all you'll get from lamb. It's also a veritable multivitamin when it comes to nutrition.

In fact, a four-ounce serving provides:

- **41% of the RDA for Vitamin B12** – This vitamin is essential for healthy nervous and digestive systems, for energy production, to reduce heart-harming *homocysteine* and more.
- **49% of the RDA for Selenium** – An antioxidant micronutrient that is vital for healthy cell division and cancer protection, thyroid health and detoxification.
- **39% of the RDA for Vitamin B3** – Helps convert food into fuel (glucose), is essential for the nervous system, helps the body make hormones, and is important for healthy circulation.
- **31% of the RDA for Zinc** – A mineral with an important role in immune function, as well as the synthesis of proteins and DNA in the body.
- **23% of the RDA for Phosphorous** – A mineral needed for healthy bones and teeth, as well as aiding the body in using carbohydrates and fats and making protein.
- **15% of the RDA for Iron** – A mineral that is necessary to make hemoglobin and myoglobin, the proteins in red blood cells and muscles that help transport and store oxygen.

And the nutritional benefits don't end there.

Get the Health Benefits of Fish... by Eating Lamb?

Lamb is also a good source of omega 3 fats – the healthy fats typically found in cold-water fish – that have been shown to reduce inflammation, boost brain health and guard against cancer and heart disease (to name just a few).

In fact, ounce-for-ounce, **lamb provides roughly 50% of the omega-3's you'll find in tuna!** With the current concerns about the health of our oceans and the often high cost of clean-sourced fish, enjoying lamb is an economical way to fortify your diet with a safe source of healthy omega-3 fats.

And speaking of fats, here's something else that may surprise you ...

Lamb: A Mediterranean Staple with Many Health Benefits

Almost 40% of the fats in lamb come from *oleic acid*. This is the monounsaturated fat best known for its prevalence in the Mediterranean diet and a reduced risk of heart disease.

Lamb is also one of the best known sources of *conjugated linoleic acid* (CLA). This is a unique fat that is found only in the meat and milk of ruminants (ie. cows, goats, sheep). CLA has been associated with a plethora of health benefits, including improved immune function, reduced inflammation, healthy bone mass, as well as blood sugar regulation, weight loss and improved lean body mass!

Getting More Lamb in Your Diet

Lamb pairs well with Mediterranean spices and herbs including mint, basil, oregano, rosemary and thyme. It also goes well with more exotic flavors, reminiscent of Indian and Middle Eastern cuisine, including curries, cumin, coriander and allspice.

While the iconic rack of lamb makes a beautiful and delicious centerpiece for holiday gatherings or dinner parties, there are plenty of quick and delicious ways to put lamb on the table any night of the week:

- **Ground Lamb:** Add a few simple spices to ground lamb for quick and delicious [lamb burgers](#). Or make Mediterranean meatballs infused with oregano, rosemary and thyme served over a bed of mixed greens or zucchini “noodles”.
- **Lamb Shoulder:** Do you love the simplicity of set-it-and-forget it meals? Add this delicious cut of lamb to your slow cooker for a fork-tender, no-fuss dinner brimming with health benefits.
- **Leg of Lamb Steaks:** Get the taste of leg of lamb in a fraction of the time by choosing leg of lamb steaks. Marinate in a high quality olive oil, Mediterranean herbs and garlic overnight, then grill or broil for a dinner in 15 minutes flat.

And in the spirit of nose-to-tail eating and packing more nutrient-dense foods into your diet, don't forget about the many unique culinary options lamb provides. With the many nutrition benefits and culinary options lamb offers, there's no need to save it for a special occasion. However, it is important to note that when choosing lamb, it should be grass-fed and finished to get the greatest health benefits. While vitamins and minerals may be comparable in grain-finished lamb, levels of CLA, omega-3's and oleic acid will be up to 50% higher in grass-finished!

Stock up on grass-fed ground lamb, roasts, ribs, loins and organs for deliciously differently and versatile meals packed with nutrient and flavor.

Information obtained from the “Healing Gourmet.”