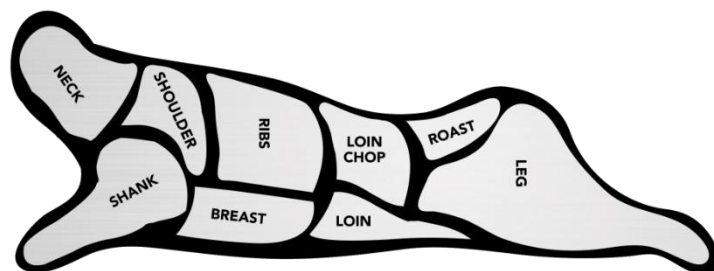


American LAMB

By Susan Schoenian, Sheep & Goat Specialist Emeritus, University of Maryland Extension. 2023.

American lamb

is rich in high quality protein and many vitamins and minerals, including zinc, selenium, iron, and B-vitamins. Lamb contains the highest amount of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and is easier to digest than other meats. American lamb is tasty, too, preferred by many top chefs.



Lamb is the meat from a sheep less than one year of age vs. mutton which is from sheep over 1.



Grain-fed or grass-fed?

Most US lambs are finished on mostly grain diets. Grain-finished lambs usually produce higher-yielding, heavier-muscled carcasses, but with more fat. Most Americans prefer the milder flavor of grain-fed lamb. At the same time, there is a growing demand for more "natural" grass-fed meat. Grass-fed lambs usually produce leaner carcasses with a more desirable fatty acid profile. Some people prefer the "gamier" flavor of grass-fed lamb.

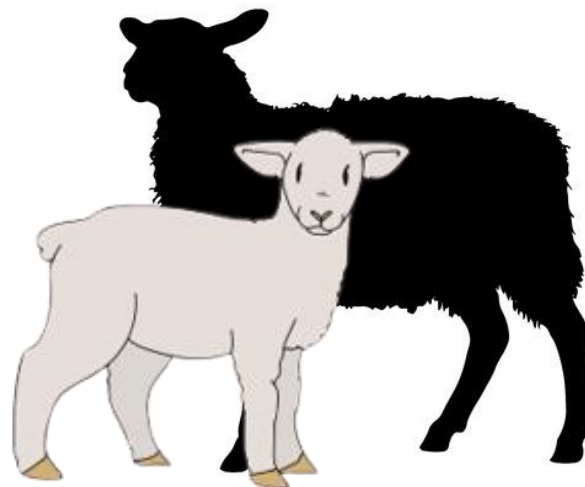
Ethnic flavor

The per capita consumption of lamb is low in the US, but it is much higher among people of certain ethnicities. Among the biggest consumers of lamb are Middle Easterners, Hispanics, Greeks, and Italians.



Lamb of God

Lamb is usually the meat of choice for many Christians, Muslims, and Jews in celebration of their religious holidays and traditions.



A place for every lamb

The average weight of lambs harvested in the US is over 130 lbs., but not every consumer or market wants such a big lamb.

The ethnic and other non-traditional markets tend to prefer lighter, leaner lambs. The good thing is there is a demand for every size and condition of lamb.