

Roasted Rack of Lamb with Sage-Pecan Crust

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If anyone tells you rack of lamb is difficult to cook, they're lying. It's only difficult to buy. But once you get it home, wounded though your pocketbook may feel, it doesn't take much. Crust it with a simple mixture of breadcrumbs, meaty pecans, and chopped fresh sage, and you've got as fancy a main course as anyone ever needs.

TIME: 10 minutes prep

MAKES: 4 servings

1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs

1/2 cup finely chopped pecans

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh sage (lightly packed)

3 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt salt, plus more for lamb

Freshly ground pepper

1 (1 1/2 pound) rack of lamb (Frenched)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Mix the breadcrumbs, pecans, sage, and 2 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil in a small bowl. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt and a good grinding of fresh pepper, and blend well with a fork.

Coat a rack of lamb with the remaining 1/2 tablespoon olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Place the lamb fat side-up on a baking sheet or on a roasting rack in a pan, and press the crust into lamb, on the fatty part and on the bones. (It's okay if some of the crumbs fall to the bottom of the pan.) Roast for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the crust is nicely browned and the lamb measures about 130 degrees on an instant-read thermometer (for medium-rare). Remove from oven and let rest 5 to 10 minutes before slicing into chops. (Be sure to serve any crumbs from the pan along with the chops.)